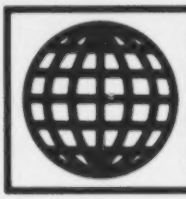

Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-027 *8 February 1996*

CONTENTS

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Iranian, Bahraini Embassies in Kuwait Trade Accusations *[London AL-HAYAH 8 Feb]* 1

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: VOP Reports 'Arafat-Christopher News Conference *[Jericho VOP]* 1
Palestinian Affairs: Radio Reports 'Arafat-Christopher News Conference *[Jerusalem Radio]* .. 1
Palestinian Affairs: Adviser Comments on 'Arafat-Christopher Meeting *[Jericho VOP]* 2
Palestinian Affairs: Jerusalem Meeting Held To 'Resist' Israeli Plans *[Jericho VOP]* 2
Palestinian Affairs: Jihad Leader Denies Movement To Kill 'Arafat *[AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH 5 Feb]* 3

ARAB AFRICA

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak's Reception of Pelletreau Reported *[Cairo Radio]* 4
Egypt: Christopher's Success Seen Depending on 'New Realities' *[Cairo Radio]* 4
Egypt: Lawyers Take 'Legal Measures' Against Jordan's King Husayn *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 4
Egypt: Daily Criticizes Israeli Minister's 'Reckless' Remark *[AL-AKHBAR 31 Jan]* 4
Egypt: 'Crisis' Within Brotherhood Over New Party Viewed *[AL-MUSAWWAR 2 Feb]* 5
Egypt: Al-Wasat Members Reject MB Guidance Bureau's Demands *[AL-AHALI 31 Jan]* 5
Egypt: Country Chosen as Center for Monitoring Nuclear Tests *[MENA]* 6
Egypt: Rights Group Sees Crisis in Press-Government Relations *[AFP]* 6

Libya

Libya: Editor Criticizes Secretary Perry's Support for Israel *[JANA]* 6
Libya: General People's Congress Convenes, Invites al-Qadhdhafi *[Tripoli Radio]* 7

Morocco

Morocco: Spain's Gonzalez Says Countries Still Differ on Ceuta, Melilla *[MAP]* 7
Morocco: Gonzalez Says Ceuta, Melilla 'Integral Part' of Spain *[Paris International]* 8
Morocco: Link Across Gibraltar Strait Focus of Meeting With Spain *[MAP]* 8
Morocco: Customs Chief Charged as Anti-Smuggling Campaign Continues *[MAP]* 9
Morocco: Government To Sue Weekly, OGD for Defamation *[Paris International]* 9

Sudan

Sudan: Closure of U.S. Embassy in Khartoum Reported *[Cairo Radio]* 9
Sudan: Minister Says U.S. Court 'Concealed Some Evidence' in Case *[Omdurman Radio]* 9
Sudan: OAU Asked To Send Supervisors To Oversee Elections *[MENA]* 10

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Bahrain

Bahrain: Lawyer Arrested on Incitement Charges *[MENA]* 11

Jordan: Government To Revive National Security Council *[JORDAN TIMES 7 Feb]* 33
Jordan: Information Ministry Reportedly To Be Eliminated *[JORDAN TIMES 7 Feb]* 34

LEBANON

Lebanon: Hizballah Official Calls U.S. Envoy 'Terrorist' *[Voice of the Oppressed]* 35
Lebanon: 2 Sudanese Indicted for Activity Against Egyptian Embassy *[MENA]* 35
Lebanon: Al-Hariri Views Israeli Position, Stresses Resolution 425 *[Beirut Radio]* 35
Lebanon: Buwayz Says Peres Aiming To Stir Up Dispute With Syria *[Beirut Radio]* 35
Lebanon: Syria's al-Shar' Arrives With al-Asad Message *[VOL]* 35
Lebanon: Syria's al-Shar' Discusses U.S. Peace Moves, Ties *[Radio Free Lebanon]* 36
Lebanon: Hizballah Augments Cooperation With Palestinian Factions *[Voice of the South]* 36
Lebanon: Hizballah, Amal Hold Coordination Meeting *[Voice of the Oppressed]* 36
Lebanon: Amal Claims Attacks on Israelis; Casualties Inflicted *[Beirut Radio]* 37
Lebanon: 'Fierce' Exchanges of Fire Between IDF-SLA, 'Terrorists' *[Jerusalem Radio]* 37
Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Claims Attack on SLA Position *[Voice of the Oppressed]* 37
Lebanon: 2 Israeli Soldiers Wounded in Hizballah Attack *[Beirut Radio]* 37
Lebanon: 3 Israeli Soldiers Said Killed by Islamic Resistance *[Beirut Radio]* 37
Lebanon: Shelling, Mock Raids Reported in South *[Beirut Radio]* 37

SYRIA

Syria: Importance of Latest Christopher Visit Viewed *[SYRIA TIMES 6 Feb]* 39
Syria: Decision To Resume Talks Confirms Concern for Peace *[Damascus Radio]* 39
Syria: Next Round of Talks Called 'Important Test' for Israel *[Damascus Radio]* 40
Syria: Al-Ba'th Argues Talks 'Below' Expectations *[SANA]* 41

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Iran's Borujerdi, Dostam Hold Peace Talks in Pakistan *[Islamabad Radio]* 42
Afghanistan: Ex-President Urges 'Sensible' Solution to Crisis *[Message of Freedom]* 42
Afghanistan: Government Forces Said Defeated in Clash With Wahdat-e Eslami *[Message of Freedom]* 42
Afghanistan: Taleban Rockets Hit Kabul After 'Failed Attack' *[Kabul Radio]* 42
Afghanistan: 'Heavy Clashes' in Emam Sahib Leave 100 Dead *[Message of Freedom]* 43
Afghanistan: Government Reportedly Planning To Retake Herat *[Message of Freedom]* 43

India

India: Chavan Says U.S. Backs Bhutto Because Pakistan Arms Buyer *[DAINIK JAGRAN 2 Feb]* 43
India: Official Expects Fourfold Increase in Trade With PRC *[Delhi Radio]* 43
India: Article Warns of Growing PRC Influence in Burma *[AJ 16 Jan]* 43
India: Arrest Warrants Issued Against Former Minister Rai, Others *[Delhi Radio]* 45
India: ISRO Signs Contract With Arianespace for Satellite Launch *[Delhi Radio]* 45
India: Poll Shows Congress To Sweep Elections in Andhra Pradesh *[THE ASIAN AGE 7 Feb]* 45
India: Mukherjee Reiterates Commitment to Globalization Process *[Delhi TV]* 46
India: Minister Denies Rupee Fall To Lead to $6 Billion Trade Gap *[Delhi Radio]* 46
India: Bank Announces Steps To Curb Speculation in Money Market *[Delhi Radio]* 46
India: 3 'Foreign Mercenaries,' 6 Militants Killed in Kashmir *[Delhi Radio]* 46

Iran

Iran: Expulsions of Bahraini, Iranian Diplomats Reported *[TEHRAN TIMES 3 Feb]* 46
Iran: Bahrain's Problems Said Due to 'No Parliament' *[TEHRAN TIMES 3 Feb]* 47

Iran: Khamene'i Addresses Air Force on U.S. Policy, Mideast Peace *[Tehran Radio]* 47
Iran: U.S. Said Waging Psychological War Against Sudan *[Tehran Radio]* 48
Iran: Majles Statement Criticizes U.S. Policy *[IRNA]* 48
Iran: Russia's Primakov Invites Velayati To Visit Moscow *[IRNA]* 49
Iran: Police To Collect Unlicensed Weapons 11 Feb *[Tehran Radio]* 49
Iran: President Addresses Cabinet Meeting 7 Feb *[IRNA]* 49
Iran: Ground Forces' Commander Interviewed on Arms, Readiness *[Tehran Radio]* 49
Iran: Hashemi-Rafsanjani Discusses Elections *[Tehran Radio]* 50
Iran: Minister Suggests Need for Consensus in Forming Party *[TEHRAN TIMES 3 Feb]* 50
Iran: Legality of Officials' Statement Discussed *[ABRAR 24 Jan]* 51

Pakistan

Pakistan: Minister on Terrorist Groups, Egyptian Embassy Blast *[MENA]* 52
Pakistan: Prime Minister on Conflict With India, Extremism *[MENA]* 53
Pakistan: Iranian Envoy Comments on Afghan Peace Efforts *[IRNA]* 53
Pakistan: Bhutto's 'Emotional' Speech on Kashmir Criticized *[JASARAT 7 Feb]* 53
Pakistan: MQM Senator Asks Army Chief To Protect Muhajirs *[MQM NEWS 8 Feb]* 54

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: 'Unprecedented' Security Measures Implemented After Blast *[Tamil Eelam News WWW 5 Feb]* 54
Sri Lanka: Foreign Envoys Express Solidarity With Government *[Colombo International]* 55
Sri Lanka: Government Urges Foreign Envoys To Take Action Against LTTE *[DAILY NEWS 8 Feb]* 55
Sri Lanka: European Union To Step Up Surveillance on LTTE *[Colombo International]* 55
Sri Lanka: Reports Claim LTTE Hopes To Execute 40 'Arrested' Civilians *[DAILY NEWS 8 Feb]* 56
Sri Lanka: Report Details Latest Battles Between Troops, LTTE 'Rebels' *[DAILY NEWS 7 Feb]* 56

Iranian, Bahraini Embassies in Kuwait Trade Accusations

MM0802114696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 8 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Hasan al-Luqays: "Iran Attacks Bahrain Through Statement Distributed by Its Embassy in Kuwait"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama — The Iranian Government has embarked through its embassy in Kuwait on a step reflecting — according to informed sources in Manama — Iranian interference in Bahrain's internal affairs. It has issued and distributed to accredited embassies in Kuwait a statement accusing the Bahraini Government of discriminating among its citizens. The Iranian Embassy statement attributed recent troubles in Bahrain to an escalation in the disagreements between Doha and Manama.

In a counter-statement the Bahraini Embassy in Kuwait expressed its "deep regret" for "the lies and false allegations contained in the Iranian statement about conditions in the State of Bahrain, which are tantamount to incitement and direct interference in the internal affairs of an independent and sovereign state bound to the Islamic Republic of Iran by relations based on good-neighborliness, mutual respect, and noninterference in one another's internal affairs."

The Iranian Embassy statement said that "the troubles in Bahrain resumed following an escalation in disagreements between Manama and Doha," pointing out that "the policy of discrimination pursued by the government against the Shi'ah was one of the main factors and reasons that led to recent troubles." The Iranian statement attacked the United States for remaining silent on the region while continuing to "talk loudly about democracy and human rights." [passage omitted]

The statement issued by the Bahraini Embassy in Kuwait said that "while condemning the false allegations and lies contained in the [Iranian] statement, the Embassy of the State of Bahrain in the State of Kuwait would like to stress that conditions in Bahrain are normal and that calm, security, and stability are prevalent throughout the country, thanks to the Bahraini people's vigilance and awareness of the tendentious campaigns launched upon them and the schemes hatched against them to ignite the fire of sedition among the people of the one homeland, with a view to undermining security and stability there and destroying the achievements they have made and the prosperity they have achieved."

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: VOP Reports 'Arafat-Christopher News Conference

JN0702200596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat called on the United States to impress on the Israeli Government the need to implement the articles of the Oslo agreement, especially with respect to the release of prisoners, women and men, and to stop land confiscations.

At a news conference he held at the conclusion of his meeting today with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, President 'Arafat said the talks dealt with the U.S. role during the final-status negotiations, as well as the establishment of industrial zones. On the recent PLO Executive Committee meeting, President 'Arafat told journalists that the committee discussed the arrangements for the convocation of the next session of the Palestine National Council [PNC]. On the amendment of the Palestinian Charter, 'Arafat said this is not the first time an amendment is demanded by the Israelis. However, he said, the charter amendment is exclusively part of the jurisdiction of the PNC.

For his part, Christopher stressed the continued U.S. support for the peace process. He said he is pleased with the success of the Palestinian presidential and legislative elections. The U.S. secretary also announced the allocation of $7.2 million to help bolster Palestinian democracy.

Palestinian Affairs: Radio Reports 'Arafat-Christopher News Conference

JN0702123496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1055 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Report by Hasan Abu-Zayid in Gaza; from the "With the Midday Events" program — italicized passages recorded; all remarks by Christopher in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] The meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat ended a short while ago. At the end of the meeting, the two men held a news conference in which Christopher said the United States will support the PA morally and materially in order to continue the peace process. He said the United States will offer $2.7 million in financial assistance to help the Palestinians build democratic institutions.

Christopher congratulated 'Arafat on his election as PA chairman. Christopher said: *They will certainly have the strong backing of the United States. We'll make every effort to mobilize international support for economic*

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development and democratization, including our own bilateral assistance programs.

In reply to a question on whether the earlier elections will influence Israeli-Syrian talks, the U.S. secretary of state said the Israeli and Syrian sides decided to continue the negotiations despite the early elections and without paying attention to this subject. The Israeli people's election of a government will not prevent the peace process from continuing.

Christopher said: *The Israelis and the Syrians plan to continue in the peace process without regard to the early elections in Israel, so we have a continuity of the peace process. I think that is highly desirable. I don't want to make any comment on the outcome of the Israeli elections. That's for the Israeli people to decide what is important. From my standpoint at the present time, the United States' standpoint is that the parties are prepared to...[sentence incomplete as heard]*

President 'Arafat told the news conference that the following topics were discussed: *There were many subjects, headed by the U.S. effort to help us in the final status negotiations, as well their assistance in setting up industrial zones. In addition, we asked them to help us persuade the Israelis to remain committed to what has been agreed to, especially concerning the male and female prisoners, halting the confiscation of lands, and other issues that were agreed to in Taba. We also congratulated Mr. Christopher for his efforts with Syrian and Lebanese parties in order to realize a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, God willing.*

We asked President 'Arafat if the Palestinian National Charter will be amended and whether this subject been discussed at the meeting with Christopher. He replied: *Yes, this was not the first time we have discussed this subject. The U.S. delegation raised this subject with us several times. We told them that we are committed to this in accordance with the agreement, but it is the responsibility and authority of the Palestine National Council, and not our individual authority, based on our respect for democracy.*

Palestinian Affairs: Adviser Comments on 'Arafat-Christopher Meeting

JN0702125596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1115 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Interview with Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, by unidentified radio correspondent on 7 February; place not given; from the "Today's Events" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-Rudaynah] First, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher congratulated President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] on the results of the elections and the broad Palestinian participation in these elections. He wished the president and the assembly success.

The talks dealt with Palestinian-U.S. relations. Christopher reiterated his country's support for the peace process and the Palestinian National Authority and praised the Palestinian political performance in this stage. The talks also dealt with the U.S. role in supporting the peace process.

In addition, some comments were conveyed to Secretary Christopher about the Palestinian track and the upcoming Palestinian-Israeli talks.

Christopher briefed President Abu-'Ammar on the talks on the Syrian track. Abu-'Ammar welcomed the progress on the Syrian track and reiterated that the Palestinian side calls for a just and comprehensive peace on all tracks — the Palestinian, the Egyptian, the Syrian, and the Lebanese. This is the Palestinian understanding of a just and comprehensive peace and was reiterated by President Abu-'Ammar during the official round of talks and at the news conference afterward.

[Correspondent] Brother Nabil, what is your assessment of the visits to the region by U.S. officials and their meetings with President 'Arafat. The president met recently with Al Gore, Dennis Ross, and Christopher. How do you assess these meetings?

[Abu-Rudaynah] It is obvious that Palestinian-U.S. relations are improving. As you have just said, Al Gore visited us twice and Secretary Christopher visits us whenever he comes to the region. Palestinian-U.S. relations are proceeding on the right path. U.S. support for the peace process is clear, and bilateral relations are being reinforced at every meeting.

[Correspondent] Thank you, Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat.

[Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic at 1200 GMT on 7 February adds: "The talks between President Yasir 'Arafat and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher ended at noon today. The talks dealt with ways to strengthen Palestinian-U.S. relations and the latest developments in the Middle East peace process."]

Palestinian Affairs: Jerusalem Meeting Held To 'Resist' Israeli Plans

JN0702185196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of Jerusalem in the Palestinian National Author-

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ity; Awqaf Minister Shaykh Hasan Tahbub; Bayt Sahur Mayor Hanna al-Atrash, and a number of Legislative Council Me..ibers from the Jerusalem area, held a meeting at Orient House in occupied Jerusalem today.

The meeting, which was a follow up to last Wednesday's [31 January] meeting, focused on the effect of the Israeli Authorities' confiscation of areas in Jabal Abu-Ghunaym area in order to expand settlements by setting up 6,500 housing units as part of the Israeli settlement project in the area surrounding occupied Jerusalem.

The participants decided to set up three committees to resist the Israeli settlement project in the Jerusalem area. These committees are: The Legal and Technical Committee, the Political Committee, and the Popular Committee.

Palestinian Affairs: Jihad Leader Denies Movement To Kill 'Arafat

TA0702145696 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 5 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Munir Abu-Rizq]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — Shaykh Nafidh 'Azzam, a prominent Islamic Jihad leader, denied that the movement had threatened to assassinate President Yasir 'Arafat in retaliation for the killing of two of the movement's members during a clash with the Palestinian police two days ago.

In a statement to AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH, 'Azzam said that the Islamic Jihad movement did not issue any threat at all against President 'Arafat, although some slogans by ordinary individuals were heard during the funeral. He added that there can be no intention in the movement of inflicting any harm on President 'Arafat.

'Azzam said that the movement will exert every possible effort to prevent an escalation of tensions. He called on the Palestinian Authority to put on trial the policemen who fired on the two Islamic Jihad members.

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Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak's Reception of Pelletreau Reported

NC0802102296 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak received Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle Eastern affairs, at the Presidential Palace this morning. Dr. Usamah al- Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, and U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Edward Walker also attended the meeting. Pelletreau is scheduled to brief President Mubarak on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's latest tour of the region.

Egypt: Christopher's Success Seen Depending on 'New Realities'

NC0702200496 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Commentary by 'Atif 'Umar: "Christopher's Tour and Nations' Hope for Peace in the Region"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Administration's renewed attempt to achieve progress on the Syrian-Israeli track through Secretary of State Warren Christopher's 17th tour of the region is based on new realities governing the Middle East situation.

First, both the Syrian and Israeli sides insist upon reaching an agreement by the end of this year out of concern for their countries' vital interests. Developments that have taken place since 1990 have resulted in policies that must be continued. A departure from these policies would have repercussions for the international order that no country is able to risk. All major powers—led by the United States, which plays a major role in current world politics—have agreed on that international framework.

Based on these concepts, the Syrian and Israeli sides held several rounds of talks in Maryland, closely followed by the United States. The United States, convinced that both sides truly wish to reach an agreement despite vast differences on some issues, worked to resolve their frequent differences. This was confirmed by President Clinton in his recent news conference in Washington when he received French President Jacques Chirac.

Second, President Mubarak is continuing his efforts to bring the sides closer and remove the obstacles of the past few years. These efforts stem from concern over Arab interests in general and Syrian interests in particular. He is also concerned about Arab security and stability. This security and stability cannot be separated in any case from world security and stability, which concern all nations, especially after a series of confrontations that have only left destruction and backwardness.

These efforts, about which Egyptian political leadership is enthusiastic, are part of Egyptian-Syrian coordination. All Arab countries are consulting about this coordination because all parties are eager to achieve a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

Peace will allow Syria to recover its occupied land in the Golan and Israel will get full guarantees of pre-5 June [1967] borders. This is in addition to the establishment of normal relations in all political, economic, and commercial aspects with all neighboring Arab countries based on mutual confidence and full respect for the international laws governing relations.

Third, the Syrian side is still clinging to the resolutions passed by the Madrid peace conference which established the principle of land for peace as a basis for a settlement between the Arabs and Israel. The Syrian side is also showing a more realistic understanding of the security arrangements demanded by Israel. This confirms its sincere desire for a peace based on justice, and its understanding of the requirements of the peace process. The goal is for the region to emerge from the vicious circle in which all the nations' rights to live in security, peace, and stability have been frustrated.

Egypt: Lawyers Take 'Legal Measures' Against Jordan's King Husayn

JN0702213696 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 2000 GMT 7 Feb 96

[From the "Panorama" news program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Some 11 Egyptian lawyers have taken legal measures against King Husayn to prevent him from interfering in Iraq's internal affairs. The lawyers, who presented themselves as Egyptians and pan-Arabists, asked the Cairo first instance court to send a warning to the Jordanian monarch, asking him to leave Iraq's internal affairs to its people and leadership. They emphasized that they are directly concerned with this matter because King Husayn's ambitions are endangering pan-Arab security, as they put it.

Egypt: Daily Criticizes Israeli Minister's 'Reckless' Remark

NC0602212696 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 31 Jan 96 p 1

[Article by Chief Editor Jalal Duwaydar: "Retraction Does Not Negate the Insolence of This Baraq"]

[FBIS Translated Text] We have become accustomed to hearing some Israeli officials, acting deliberately and

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in spite, every now and then go beyond the limits of political ethics in their remarks and statements. This is due either to a distribution of roles, a strategy Israel has mastered, or as a reflection of their subconscious, deep feeling of hostility and a false sense of superiority. But these officials must realize that this vituperation is no longer acceptable, for it arouses the contempt of the party targeted by this abuse and leads it to harden its position and hold on tighter to its rights.

An example of this erroneous attitude is a statement by Israeli Foreign Minister Baraq that was marked by foul language and unacceptable rudeness. The fact that this Baraq yesterday retracted his remarks does not excuse him from his error. It only confirms his unbalanced nature and his failure to observe diplomatic norms. To understand the ill manners of the Israeli foreign minister we must cite the remarks which he later retracted. In his statement, Baraq referred to the Arab states with which Israel is seeking to make peace as galabiyahs [traditional Arab dress]. Asked by a reporter if his reference to the Arabs as "galabiyahs" is similar to the reference to the Israelis as "hook-nosed," Baraq backed down, adding that his remark was not the best statement made by the foreign minister in recent weeks.

Baraq made this unfortunate remark to Israeli Hebrew-language television in an unfortunate statement about negotiations on the Syrian track. In his statement, Baraq noted that it is not important to make peace with 20 or even six of those wearing the "galabiyah" if real peace is made between Syria and Lebanon!! In the same statement, Baraq ruled out the termination of the state of war with the Arab states after a peace agreement with Syria is signed!

What does this irresponsible statement, made in Hebrew, mean Mr. Baraq? Is it for local consumption to serve election purposes or does it reflect the determination of some Israeli leaders to resist peace and create an atmosphere of tension and instability? The regional movement toward a just and comprehensive peace must make everybody understand that there is no room for such reckless remarks.

Egypt: 'Crisis' Within Brotherhood Over New Party Viewed

NC0602210396

[FBIS Report] Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic on 2 February publishes on pages 18 and 19 a 3,000-word report by Hamdi Rizq in which he writes about a "crisis" within the "outlawed" Muslim Brotherhood. In the report, entitled "The Most Serious Rebellion Inside the Brotherhood," Rizq attributes the crisis to the bid by some members of the Brotherhood to establish a new political party known as "Al-Wasat."

Rizq explains that at the decision of the Brotherhood's "Guidance Bureau," a "Tripartite Internal Committee of Inquiry" has been set up to conduct "extensive investigations" of the 46 Brotherhood members on the list of founders of the planned party. The committee, chaired by Deputy Guide Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, includes Ibrahim Sharaf, identified as the official in charge of the Brotherhood's al-Tawfiqiyah office before it was closed by a court order; and Ahmad Hasanayn, the eldest member of the Guidance Bureau.

Rizq adds that in its first hearing "last week," the committee summoned Abu-al-'Ula Madi, the Al-Wasat founders' representative; and lawyer 'Isam Sultan, who is identified as the husband of al-Hudaybi's niece. The two were "officially" accused of "dissenting from the Brotherhood and calling for the formation of a party without the knowledge of the Guidance Bureau," which is a "flagrant violation" of the principle of obedience which the two have sworn to observe. Despite their denial of the charges, al-Hudaybi recommended that they be dismissed from the group, the report adds.

According to the report, Mustafa Mashhur, the new General Guide of the Brotherhood, "remains undecided in his first decision since assuming leadership of the Guidance Bureau, particularly because the dismissal, if upheld, would involve 46 Brothers on the list of founders of the party, something that may not bode well." The remaining members of the Guidance Bureau are said to be divided on the issue, with one section favoring the dismissal and another calling for postponing the matter pending a decision by the Parties' Affairs Committee, which most likely will reject the founders' request to establish the Al-Wasat party.

Egypt: Al-Wasat Members Reject MB Guidance Bureau's Demands

NC0702163796 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 31 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translation Text] The Muslim Brotherhood [MB] members of the al-Wasat party have rejected the proposal made by the MB's Guidance Bureau to withdraw their application to the Parties' Affairs Committee. The MB members of al-Wasat requested permission to establish their party. They also refused to appear before an MB inquiry committee.

The MB members of al-Wasat stressed that they no longer belong to the MB organization. Meanwhile, the Guidance Bureau members met on Saturday, 27 January, but failed to reach any decision concerning the expulsion of the MB group members of al-Wasat.

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Egypt: Country Chosen as Center for Monitoring Nuclear Tests

NC0602163796 Cairo MENA in English 1515 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 6 (MENA)—Egypt was chosen to be one of the world centers to monitor and control the implementation of the agreement to prohibit nuclear tests due to be concluded by the end of this year, ambassador Sayyid Qasim, assistant foreign minister for multilateral relations, told reporters today.

A station to monitor nuclear tests will be set up in Egypt as part of an international network to monitor and control these tests, Ambassador Qasim said. Egypt has called for an immediate special committee for observing nuclear disarmament and to start negotiations on a program to be implemented in stages for nuclear disarmament and banning development of the old arms, he said. Such a committee, he added, starts its work upon signing the agreement on the total banning of nuclear tests.

The agreement on keeping Africa free of nuclear arms is a positive step, he said. Endeavors, he said, should start to make the Middle East a region free of nuclear arms.

Egypt: Rights Group Sees Crisis in Press-Government Relations

NC0702160896 Paris AFP in English 1458 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 7 (AFP) — Relations between press and government in Egypt are in crisis after a year in which 120 journalists and writers were interrogated by the authorities or taken to court, a human rights group said Wednesday [7 February].

The Center for Human Rights Legal Aid said in a report that freedom of expression came under increasing pressure in 1995 because of new government restrictions and Islamic fundamentalists using the courts to silence critics. "For the first time ever, two journalists were tried before a military court. Physical assaults on journalists also increased, in particular during the legislative elections in November 1995," it said.

Two journalists — 'Abd al-'Al al-Baquri, editor-in-chief of AL-AHALI newspaper, and Tharwat Badawi, a reporter for the same newspaper — were jailed for two years and fined 15,000 dollars each, the report said. A third, Majdi Ahmad Husayn, editor-in-chief of AL-SHA'B newspaper was jailed for a year and fined 4,500 dollars for libeling the son of the interior minister, it added.

The group said 12 editors were currently facing trial and possible prison sentences, while the authorities were pursuing 43 journalists under a controversial new press law that brought in jail sentences of up to 15 years. Its report also focused on attempts by Islamic fundamentalists to silence writers and intellectuals with accusations of apostasy and offending Islam.

It said fundamentalists had used the judiciary to file cases against intellectuals, using the legal tool of "al-hisbah" — allowing any offended Moslem to take action — and "direct claim" which bypasses the prosecution. Some 51 writers, artists and journalists were taken to court in 1995 using direct claim, it added. "The most prominent people tried in this way were the editors of ROSE AL-YUSUF (a weekly newspaper), the actress Yusra and the poet Ahmad 'Abd-al-Mu'ti Hijazi," it reported.

The human rights group called for a comprehensive review of all legislation contradicting the right of freedom of expression, a right which it said was guaranteed by Egyptian legislation.

Libya

Libya: Editor Criticizes Secretary Perry's Support for Israel

LD0802122796 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0920 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 8 Feb (JANA) — The U.S. war [defense] secretary renewed Washington's commitment to maintain the Israeli enemy's military superiority in the region. He said that the huge U.S. military support to the Israelis, which totals $1.8 billion a year, is an indication of U.S. support for the Israelis.

The U.S. war secretary added that the United States and the Israeli enemy are working on developing Israel's Arrow missile system which is costing over $500 million.

The U.S. war secretary also announced that his country is cooperating with Jordan and others in the region to carry out actions against Iraq.

The U.S. secretary said this in his speech at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

JANA's Arab affairs editor commented on the U.S. war secretary's speech in which Perry reaffirmed the United States' intention to continue supporting the Israeli enemy militarily and to guarantee Israel's superiority in the region. JANA's Arab affairs editor said that with this explicit admission the United States affirms its absolute support for Israel against the Arab nation and its future. This again shows that the United States

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is not a neutral party in the region and it is using all of its advanced military and technical ability to safeguard Israel's superiority and to enable it to control the Arab nation's fate, loot its resources, and completely annihilate it.

The editor added that this admission by the United States at a time when some Arabs were racing toward capitulation and the normalization of their relations with the Israeli enemy which never ceased to threaten a new war against the Arab countries and brandishes its huge reserve of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear warhead-carrying missiles which can reach anywhere in the Arab nation.

The editor pointed out that while openly announcing its guarantee of Israel's military superiority, both in quantity and in quality, the United States is exercising all kinds of pressure and blackmail in order to deprive the Arabs even of weapons for self-defense and guarantees of minimal military capability to enable them to defend their existence.

The editor stressed that continuation of the United States' absolute support to the Israeli enemy highlights the size and the danger of the U.S.-Israeli hostile crusader plan that is being hatched against the Arab nation.

The JANA Arab affairs editor quoted to this effect the speech by the brother leader of the revolution at a mass rally held on the eve of the 82d anniversary of the famous Al-Mahruqah Battle when he said: "They have now started to implement this plan" and indicated that Israel possessed more than 200 nuclear bombs. The brother leader said that when they had doubts about Iraq they completely destroyed it and wiped it out. He wondered: "Why did they not destroy Israel's nuclear power, and why do the Arabs not reject talks with the Israelis or even the march of surrender and shame in which they are taking part without the condition that Israel's nuclear weapons, of which there are more than 200, are destroyed?" The leader wondered who these destructive weapons are aimed at: "Are they for fishing," [he asked? "Yes], they are for fishing the children of the Arab nation."

The JANA editor pointed to the part of the U.S. war secretary's speech concerning Israel's support for the plan to selling U.S. F-16 aircraft to Jordan. The JANA Arab affairs editor said: If the Israeli enemy is thinking of allowing Jordan to obtain American weapons, "then who are these weapons going to be used against?" If this is true, then it does not depart from the U.S. blackmail aimed at bringing the Arabs to their knees and dragging them into the abyss of surrender, especially since the United States has already prescribed that any Arab country which wishes to purchase arms from the United States must first obtain Israel's approval — and must even make their application through the Israeli enemy before their purchase order can be met by the United States. This shows in no uncertain terms the extent of humiliation and disdain being practised against those who are running to surrender to the enemy of this nation.

Libya: General People's Congress Convenes, Invites al-Qadhdhafi

LD0702141196 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1240 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In affirmation of the authority of the sovereign people, who are the sole authority, and in embodiment of the direct people's democracy, which is the pillar of the jamahiri system, the General People's Congress [GPC] — which brings together the people's congresses, the people's committees, trade unions, federations and vocational leagues — started its sessions in al-Wafa' Hall in the city of Surt today to formulate the resolutions of the basic people's congresses. [passage omitted]

Here is a recording of the speech of the secretary of the GPC at the opening session:

[Begin recording] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate, may God's peace and prayers be upon God's Messenger. [passage omitted]

The GPC is pleased to address an official invitation to the brother leader of the revolution, the great leader of the revolution, to do us the honor of participating in and attending [the GPC] in support and consolidation of the people's authority, the sole authority, which will be represented by his participation. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Morocco

Morocco: Spain's Gonzalez Says Countries Still Differ on Ceuta, Melilla

LD0702132196 Rabat MAP in English 1226 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Feb 7 (MAP) — Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez has conceded that his country and Morocco have a very different view regarding the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (two northern Moroccan cities still occupied by Spain), adding that this situation should not prevent the two countries from cooperating and developing their relations.

Speaking at a news conference here Tuesday at the end of a two day official visit to Morocco, Felipe Gonzalez

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affirmed his "country's conviction as to the belonging of Ceuta and Melilla to our territorial integrity".

Moroccan prime minister and minister for foreign affairs and cooperation, Abdellatif Filali who was attending this press conference, said the issue of the two Spanish enclaves in Morocco, although it did not top the agenda of the Moroccan-Spanish summit, was discussed with the visiting delegation.

"We agreed to keep in touch to examine this problem and we wish that after the elections (set for March 4 in Spain), we shall continue negotiations in a spirit of friendship and neighborliness", he concluded.

Few years ago, King Hassan II of Morocco had called for the setting up of a "reflection cell" to ponder this issue between the two countries. The two enclaves constitute the main market for Moroccan smugglers who sale their smuggled goods across the Moroccan territory.

Morocco: Gonzalez Says Ceuta, Melilla 'Integral Part' of Spain

LD0702134596 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Now, the official visit of Spanish Prime Minister Gonzalez to Morocco [5-6 February]: On this occasion he reaffirmed his support for the United Nations and its efforts to organize the referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara.

Spain has also granted Morocco the first installment of a loan for a study into, and the first stage of construction of a railway tunnel linking Morocco and Spain under the Strait of Gibraltar — a very costly project. Mouna El Banna reports:

[El Banna] The cost of the project is $4,500 million. If this financing is found from the EU, among others, the 28 km tunnel could carry 6,000 people a day on average by the year 2010. The two sides have also decided to reinforce their cooperation regarding the fight against smuggling and drugs trafficking. As for immigrants, the Moroccans and the Spaniards easily agreed on the granting of residence permits to the 80,000 Moroccans living in Spain and the 8,000 Spaniards in Morocco.

The only sour note between the two sides was the dispute over the presidios of Ceuta and Melilla in northern Morocco. I must acknowledge, said Felipe Gonzalez, that there has been a fundamental difference between the two government's positions. Ceuta and Melilla are an integral part of Spain's territory, he said, but that must not prevent consultation and the development of cooperation.

Morocco: Link Across Gibraltar Strait Focus of Meeting With Spain

LD0702135396 Rabat MAP in English 1252 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Feb 7 (MAP) — Construction works for the fixed link across Gibraltar Strait would start by the end of 1997 and will be completed in 2010, Spanish Minister of Public Works, Jose Borrel [name and title as received], told the media here Tuesday.

The Spanish minister who was among the delegation led by Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez during his two day official visit to Morocco, said the two sides (Morocco and Spain) seem to opt for an under-sea tunnel.

The idea to set a fixed connection that will link Europe to Africa across the strait of Gibraltar was launched in 1980 and since then thorough studies had been conducted on the project. Borrel said the 15 year long research and studies, concluded that the ideal way to link the two countries would be an under-sea railway tunnel.

The 400 meter-deep tunnel will be 28 km long under the sea and will stretch for another 10 km on the ground to reach the port of Tarifa in Spain and the Moroccan port of Tangier.

The railway tunnel would be crossed by 2.6 million passengers at the beginning and 3.5 million by the year 2025. Trains will have a maximum speed of 120 km per hour.

The esumated 4.5 billion dollar project will be co-financed by the European Union and other donor countries.

Gonzalez and the seven ministers accompanying him visited Morocco in the frame of the treaty of friendship, coop ration and neighborliness binding the two countries.

The visit highlighted by the signing of a five-year (1996-2000) financial protocol worth 150 billion pesetas (1.2 billion dollars) and the setting up of Spanish-Moroccan working group that will examine conditions for alleviating the Moroccan debt to Spain that reaches 1.9 billion dollars.

Cooperation in matters of trade, tourism, energy, rural electrification, renewable energies, struggle against pollution and struggle against drug trafficking and terrorism were also covered by the Moroccan-Spanish talks.

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Morocco: Customs Chief Charged as Anti-Smuggling Campaign Continues

LD0702150996 Rabat MAP in English 1320 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Casablanca, Feb. 07 (MAP) — Director general of the Moroccan Customs Department, Ali Amor, and his predecessor Hamad Jay Hokimi, were brought Tuesday to a court in Casablanca, on charges of "complicity in smuggling and non denunciation of fraud". The trial of Ali Amor, one of the pillars of the anti-smuggling campaign launched last October, Hamid Jay Hokimi and 20 other senior executives and customs agents has been postponed to next March 7 at the request of the defense which asked for time to study the case. The defendants were set free on bail.

Last Friday, two Moroccan businessmen were sentenced to five years in jail and to a fine of 345 million dirhams for illegal possession of goods and corruption. They will have to pay, jointly with a customs agent, another fine worth 210 million dirhams. In the same affair, eleven customs agents, accused of involvement in smuggling, were sentenced to a three-year jail term and a 3,000 dh fine. Many industrialists and whole-salers particularly in Casablanca were arrested within the frame of the anti-smuggling campaign.

Moroccan interior minister, Driss Basri, had affirmed lately determination to put an end to smuggling no matter how long this will take. According to the justice minister, Abderrahmane Amalou, the Moroccan economy loses 3.5 billion dollars because of smuggling.

Morocco: Government To Sue Weekly, OGD for Defamation

LD0702233096 Paris Radio France International in French 2130 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A commission of jurists set up at the Moroccan prime minister's request has decided to sue the Geopolitical Drugs Observatory [OGD] — an independent body — and the newspaper 'MAROC-HEBDO' for defamation.

This followed the publication by the newspaper of an article entitled "OGD report on drugs trafficking in Morocco" quoting passages from the report and also from an article published by the daily 'LE MONDE' on the same subject.

More details from Ghislaine Dupont:

[Dupont] The case dates back to 1994 when the Geopolitical Drugs Observatory sent a confidential report to the European Union. In it the OGD said, among other things, that in Morocco the drugs traffickers had accomplices as high up as the top echelon of the hierarchy.

A list of names was included in that confidential report, notably those of two members of the royal family, two former cabinet ministers and a whole series of presidents of local chambers of commerce, company directors, mayors and members of parliament.

This information was not to be made public and would therefore not be included in the OGD's annual report.

The problem is that the list of names and other confidential information were leaked in Brussels, probably to members of the Moroccan opposition. The OGD is now of the belief that there was a violation of private correspondence and that therefore it cannot be made answerable for information that it has never made public.

Sudan

Sudan: Closure of U.S. Embassy in Khartoum Reported

NC0802132096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Government has closed its embassy in Sudan and said it will move the headquarters of its diplomatic mission in Khartoum to the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. Voice of America Radio reported this morning that the U.S. Embassy closed its doors last night in implementation of the U.S. State Department's decision last week to withdraw the members of its diplomatic mission in Khartoum in view of the Sudanese Government's inability to guarantee their safety.

Sudan: Minister Says U.S. Court 'Concealed Some Evidence' in Case

EA0702215196 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 2245 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. 'Abd-al-Aziz Shiddu, minister of justice and Attorney General, has stated that the American court that passed unjust sentences on four Sudanese, charged with others, concealed some evidence.

He added that the defense counsels declared that the proceedings had numerous clear legal [word indistinct]. He described the trial as unjust and based on political rather than legal facts.

Shiddu said appeals had been submitted against the sentences passed in this case. He called on the Islamic nation to support the accused people and continue to fight their case considering that their trial is regarded as a [word indistinct] to all Muslims.

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Sudan: OAU Asked To Send Supervisors To Oversee Elections

NC0802121796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1100 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Addis Ababa, 8 Feb (MENA)—The Sudanese Government has asked the OAU to dispatch African supervisors to oversee the presidential elections in Sudan in March. A diplomatic source at the OAU in Addis Ababa said today that 'Uthman al-Sayyid, Sudanese ambassador to Ethiopia and the OAU, has conveyed this request to OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim. In a statement to MENA the source said that the Sudanese ambassador, after being recalled by his government, returned two days ago from Khartoum and renewed the Khartoum government's invitation to Salim Ahmed Salim to visit Sudan and hold talks with Sudanese President 'Umar al-Bashir and his government on the tension between Sudan and Ethiopia and neighboring countries and on the issue of terrorism. The source said that Salim still has reservations about accepting Khartoum's invitation to visit as long as Khartoum refuses to show any flexibility or positive response to cooperate with Ethiopia and other concerned African countries over the terrorist assault on President Mubarak in June.

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Lawyer Arrested on Incitement Charges

NC0802070596 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2220 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 7 Feb (MENA)—The security forces in Bahrain have arrested lawyer Ahmad al-Shamlan on charges of inciting recent acts of arson and sabotage in Bahrain.

The Gulf News Agency, WAKH, cited a Bahraini security official saying that Ahmad al-Shamlan "played an active role in recent incidents in Bahrain and persistently and increasingly worked on stirring up and provoking acts of violence, arson, and sabotage. He also incited the people to continue escalating such acts. Al-Shamlan has had suspect links and contacts with known terrorist and extremist parties and sides abroad."

The Bahraini security official added that the security organs in Bahrain will, after finalizing their investigations, present all the evidence they have against al-Shamlan to the legal authorities. This evidence will be backed by documents.

Al-Shamlan, who works as a lawyer, is also a poet and writer whose works are published by most Arab publishing houses. He is also a member of the Bahraini Writers' Union.

Bahrain: Foreign Schools Alerted to Possible Attacks by Locals

NC0702174496 Paris AFP in English
1626 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Report by Lachlan Carmichael]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Feb 7 (AFP) — Foreign schools here have taken more precautions to guard against the possibility of a random attack during 14 months of political unrest in Bahrain, school officials said Wednesday [7 February].

Toshimi Hatanaka, the principal of the Japanese School, said that although he did not order new security measures after a resurgence of unrest last month, "I told my watchman to watch my school more carefully." None of the families sending children to his school in Budayya, east of Manama, has returned to Japan for fear of the unrest despite reports of trouble in the same suburb, Hatanaka said. "I don't think anybody's scared. Everybody's just careful what's going on," he said. He had heard of no threats against foreigners since unrest broke out in December 1994 after the Sunni-led authorities arrested a Shiite Moslem cleric who demanded the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975.

But a Western diplomat said Bahrainis had "stoned cars picking up foreign students" two weeks ago in 'Isa Town, an area south of here where British, Indian, Pakistani as well as Bahraini schools and educational institutions are concentrated. Protesters also thumped on British cars in the area, "but they were not targeted because they were Westerners," he added. A group of Indian students said they had heard a school was stoned in the area but had no details. Edward Goodwin, the principal of the British Saint Christopher school in 'Isa Town, said he had heard no reports of stonethrowing or any other threat to students. "If we felt there was any danger, we would take steps," Goodwin said. "The situation in this area is more relaxed than last year."

Some students at Saint Christopher's said they had heard the Bahraini opposition had sent a fax ordering foreigners to leave, although they had not heard of attacks directed at foreigners. "It's just between the locals," one student said. A guard has stood outside the gate of the Saint Christopher School since U.S.-led forces throughout the Gulf launched the 1991 war to free Kuwait from seven months of Iraqi occupation, Goodwin said.

Officials at other foreign schools who did not want to be named said they had either "streamlined" security measures or asked the Bahraini authorities to deploy guards. "We have to be on our toes," a foreign school administrator said, adding there was always the risk of a random attack. "The protests are not in any organized manner. It could happen here or over there. It's a case of arson here or over there." "The school depends on the (Bahraini) government which has very tight security arrangements," he said.

Around 200,000 of the 540,000 people living in Bahrain are foreigners, with the British, French, Japanese, Indians, Pakistanis and Filipinos having their own schools. The authorities have pledged to stamp out soon the unrest, which has included fire bombings of electrical installations, businesses and cars as well as gas canister explosions and stonings. Nobody has been reported killed in the last month although at least 13 people were killed between December 1994 and April 1995.

Kuwait

Kuwait: MP Says Bahraini Authorities Acting 'Medieval'

NC0702200696 Paris AFP in English
1918 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait, Feb 7 (AFP)—A member of the Kuwaiti parliament on Wednesday [7 February] accused Bahraini leaders of acting "with a

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medieval mentality" toward opposition groups during recent political unrest. The government of Bahrain "treats its people with a medieval mentality," Islamic MP 'Adnan 'Abd-al-Samad told AFP. According to him, the leaders in Manama "have not yet understood the regional and international transformations."

'Abd-al-Samad was reacting to reports on Saturday that Bahraini authorities prevented a Kuwaiti legislator from entering the country. The unidentified MP had signed a petition calling for the restoration of parliament in Bahrain, suspended in 1975, according to the reports.

The arrest by the Bahraini government of a Bahraini Shiite Moslem cleric who also signed the petition in December 1994 sparked 14 months of unrest in the Gulf island state.

Kuwait: Information Minister Interviewed on UN Resolution 986

LD0702233996 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Information Minister Shaykh Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah said that the state of Kuwait would not accept any modification to UN Security Council Resolution 986, which attends to Iraq's special needs.

In an interview with the American NBC network in Washington last night, the information minister stressed the need for Iraq to adhere to all the articles of Security Council Resolution 986. Our correspondent in Washington, Nuha 'Abd al-Wahab, sends this report:

[Begin recording] ['Abd al-Wahab] Information Minister Shaykh Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah is currently visiting the United States. On this occasion, the American CNBC network held an interview with his excellency the minister in which he talked about the stance of Kuwait and the international community for allowing the Iraqi regime to sell part of its oil for humanitarian purposes, compensate the State of Kuwait, and compensate those harmed as a result of the Iraqi aggression in 1990.

His excellency the minister said in his interview which was broadcast live on the air within the framework of the CNBC news program that:

[Al-Sabah, in English with superimposed Arabic translation] We are used to the Iraqi style of negotiations, and the matter will require a long time. Security Council Resolution 986 will not be applied over night. I must point out that we do not accept any modification of this resolution, and it should be implemented in toto. I hope they would accept that for the salvation of the Iraqi people.

In reply to a question about the possibility of the Iraqi regime implementing the Security Council's resolutions, Shaykh Nasir al-Sabah said that:

[Al-Sabah, in English with superimposed Arabic translation] I think that the Iraqi regime feels the acuteness of the hardship, and has no choice other than to move and implement the Security Council's resolutions. This is a step in that direction, if they accept the full implementation of Resolution 986 without attempting to depart from the issues covered by the resolution. They are aware that the Security Council and the international community cling to the complete implementation of the resolution.

['Abd al-Wahab] After the interview, we asked His Excellency the Minister a question on this very issue and he gave the following reply:

[Al-Sabah] We discussed in that television program this evening the issue of the negotiations taking place in New York at present in order to find the necessary arrangements — after Iraq's approval to implement UN Security Council's resolution 986 — regarding the method for selling oil as defined in the UN Security Council's resolution.

It is necessary for us to stress our concern and that of the international community for the Iraqi people and the future of the Iraqi people, with their women and children, and the injustice to which they are subjected by the Iraqi regime.

This issue is now humanitarian and it is a humanitarian decision that allows Iraq to sell part of its oil, amounting to 2 billion dollars for 6 months, as these revenues will be placed in special accounts at the United Nations and will go first toward compensating Kuwait for the losses incurred from the occupation and destruction of Kuwait, meeting other costs, and the purchase of medicines and foodstuffs for the Iraqi people. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Kuwait: Radio Program Discusses UN-Iraq Talks

LD0702193396 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1014 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Summary] Kuwait radio carries a 47-minute live edition of its daily news analysis program 'Event and Commentary'. The program consisted of a debate conducted by an unidentified host via a satellite link with four people: Ambassador Muhammad Abu al-Hasan, Kuwait's permanent representative to the UN; 'Abd-al-Rahman al- Rashid, editor-in-chief of the London-based al-Majallah magazine; Dr. Badr Malallah, professor of political science; and Iraqi opposition figure Dr. Ahmad al-Chalabi, chairman of the Executive Council of the

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Unified Iraqi National Congress. The topic discussed is the talks between the UN and Iraq on oil-for-food, and UN Security Council Resolution 986.

The first question is addressed to Ambassador al-Hasan on whether he thinks that the Iraqi regime is trying to exploit these talks to break the international sanctions against exporting Iraqi oil. The ambassador replies that the Iraqi regime's announcement accepting the oil-for-food formula was "an attempt to absorb the growing dissatisfaction at home and to improve its image abroad.". He also says: "But in fact it does not mean it is accepting Resolution 986 as this regime, even in its round which began yesterday, has not yet used yet the word 'implementing Resolution 986' but is using the word 'negotiation' [al-tafawud]." He concludes by saying: "What is taking place since yesterday is technical sessions on the implementation mechanism and not negotiating the content or the core of the resolution."

The second question is addressed to Dr. al-Chalabi on the need for strict conditions to guarantee that oil revenues would go for humanitarian aid and the Iraqi people due to the Iraqi regime's notoriety for evasiveness and cheating.

Al-Chalabi's answer condemns Iraq's manipulation of the United Nations, and he says that Iraq is seeking to obtain foreign currency. This results in the need to watch three things. The first is the way of selling oil in order to prevent the regime from receiving any money through private deals. The second is the purchase of food and humanitarian aid. The third is transporting these materials to Iraq as the regime might obtain some money. But "the main real issue is the distribution of aid inside Iraq." He stresses the need for "the meticulous UN supervision of the distribution inside Iraq to the Iraqi people."

The third question is for Dr. Malallah on the Iraqi regime's being responsible for the suffering of its people due to its rejection of Resolution 986. Malallah agrees with this statement.

The fourth question is to al-Rashid on his opinion on the negotiations discussing the means of implementing the UN resolution rather than modifying it as the Baghdad regime wants. He reiterates what the ambassador said earlier on the need for close monitoring of distributing food to the Iraqi people and not to give in on modifying Resolution 986.

The fifth question is addressed to al-Chalabi on the possibility of lifting the sanctions if agreement is reached on a beginning to exporting oil-for-food. Al-Chalabi explains the outline of Resolution 986 and that it is not tied to lifting the sanctions. "We have sent a delegation to the United Nations and we must insist on Saddam's regime's acceptance of Resolution 986 in full — openly, publicly, and clearly. Saddam must not be allowed to go around this point," he says.

The sixth question is to al-Hasan on whether he thinks Iraq's attempts to modify Resolution 986 were to save face or for other objectives. He says that Iraq wanted to show their people and the Arab and Muslim peoples that the increased suffering of the Iraqi people was because of the Security Council and some other countries. He concludes by stressing that the Iraqi regime was responsible for the suffering of its people.

The seventh question is to all the guests on their expectations of the outcome of the current talks. Al-Rashid says that there is an opportunity for Iraq to succeed in selling its oil as the regime needs not only the food and money but also some sort of political stability.

Malallah said that the government-controlled Iraqi press was preparing the Iraqi public opinion as it had not recently said negative things about Resolution 986. It had even gone to consider accepting the resolution as a gain in itself.

Al-Chalabi says that the Iraqi regime was afraid of the closure or the limiting of the Jordanian trade route. He said: "What are the regime's advantages and disadvantages if it implements the resolution? If it implements the resolution, its advantages would be first to alleviate the popular pressure that is demanding food and medicine, and second to improve the dinar's price and therefore it would use its previous resources to purchase the banned materials as usual".

At this point the satellite link was briefly cut off. The radio pays music and is followed by the host's apology.

After the link is resumed, the eighth question is asked of al- Hasan on his political view of operating the revenues of an oil-for- food scheme, and if that would prolong the life of the Iraqi regime.

He responds that the legislator of Resolution 986 had borne in mind that this situation was temporary, and therefore made it subject to very close supervision so that the Iraqi regime would not misuse these resources. He adds that the UN would be in complete charge regarding the sale of oil and purchase of food and humanitarian materials leaving no room for the Iraqi regime's tricks. He expects the technical negotiations to last about ten days but the political round's duration depended on the results of the technical negotiation round, increased pressures on the Iraqi regime, increased desire on the ground in Iraq to achieve a quick result to accepting Resolution 986.

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The ninth question is to al-Chalabi on his comment on reports saying that the Iraqi regime was storing food and keeping it under its control to show the world that the Iraqi people were in need of food and medicine and were suffering due to the sanctions.

He says that the regime was entirely responsible for the Iraqi people's suffering from beginning to end. He confirms the reports that the Iraqi regime is using food as a weapon against the people.

The tenth and last question was to al-Rashid on the required steps to guarantee that oil revenues would not become a weapon in the hand of Saddam's regime. He says that he thought it very difficult to guarantee the distribution of each and every can of food to those who deserved it inside Iraq as this would require an enormous number of observers and personnel. Yet he said that he doubted very much that food would reach all those who deserve it. He adds that the regime might implement other resolutions after this one.

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Iraq: UN Oil-for-Food Talks Resume, Parties 'Optimistic'

JN0702174696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1650 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 7 Feb (INA)—Iraqi and UN delegations began their second official session of talks this morning as part of the official dialogue being held to find the means to solve the question of selling oil for food, medicine, and the Iraqi people's basic needs. The two delegations will hold another official session later today to continue the dialogue on the necessary technical details.

The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in New York said that all the parties participating in the dialogue are optimistic.

Iraq: Atmopshere of Oil Talks 'Businesslike,' 'Positive'

JN0702182896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1745 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 7 Feb (INA)—It was announced here today that the talks between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat are taking place in a businesslike and positive atmosphere.

UN Spokeswoman Sylvana Foa told journalists that the two sides agreed that the United Nations will issue at least one press statement at the end of each day of talks. She noted that the heads of the two delegations, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari and Hans Corell, held a closed bilateral meeting yesterday. She added that yesterday's meeting, the first in a series of meetings, was limited to procedural matters. She said the conferees analyzed relevant documents and the points that will be discussed in the subsequent stage.

Iraq: INA Reports on UN Oil-for-Food Talks

JN0802092096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0850 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 8 Feb (INA) — An INA correspondent in New York reported that the official talks between Iraq and the United Nations General Secretariat are being conducted in a constructive and positive atmosphere.

Sources from the Iraqi delegation told INA the sessions so far were characterized by technical and businesslike discussions during which the Iraqi delegation presented official documents to the UN delegation. The INA correspondent in New York says these documents explain Iraq's position on several issues on the meeting agenda, including food, medicine, and other basic humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people.

The UN delegation, led by legal adviser Hans Corell, is expected to present the UN position on some of the issues raised in the Iraqi documents in this morning's session. Private sources told INA the sessions faced no obstacles and that dialogue is going on in a constructive spirit.

Iraqi and UN delegates will resume official talks this morning on oil for food and medicine and other basic needs of the Iraqi people. The two delegations will hold their fourth official session later today.

After the third session yesterday evening, chief Iraqi delegate Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari made a brief statement to reporters in which he said the talks will resume on Thursday. The Iraqi and UN delegates held their third session at 1530 New York time [2030 GMT] yesterday. The two sides agreed that the United Nations will issue a daily statement on the talks, which began at UN headquarters on 6 February.

There are some indications the talks are proceeding in a positive and smooth manner. The United Nations announced earlier that the talks have proceeded in a positive and businesslike atmosphere.

Iraq: Daily Views Impact of UN Talks on Economy, Prices

JN0702164596 Baghdad INA in English 1445 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 7, INA—As Iraqi and UN teams are in the final arrangements for talks on an oil-food deal, Baghdad looked set this week to further boost the rate of its national currency, the dinar, against the dollar describing the abrupt decline in the prices of commodities as a favorable trend that must be sustained, BAGHDAD OBSERVER said that today.

The English daily BAGHDAD OBSERVER said today that on the eve of the New York talks, an air of suspense mixed with hope prevailed. However, the dollar's rate has not witnessed a radical change while prices of some goods continued to go down.

Iraq and the UN started late last night talks in New York on the oil-for-food deal. Baghdad has sent a team comprising representatives of oil, financial, health and economic institutions. The Iraqi team is led by Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, Iraqi UNESCO envoy who has also served as the Iraqi ambassador to the international organization. The UN team is led by UN Assistant Secretary General for Legal Affair Hans Corell.

President Saddam Husayn chaired on Saturday a meeting of the Economic Committee and experts discussing the current course of Iraq's economy. INA reported that

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the meeting reviewed the economic plan outlined by President Husayn on December 2, 1995 and the impact of the dialogue with the UN on the sale of Iraqi oil to buy basic humanitarian needs.

Iraq has introduced a package of anti-inflation austerity measures that include among other things, a sharp cut-back on public expenditure and the absorption of the huge amount of locally printed banknotes. The state has already sold some of its own cars that were being used for personal purposes. A statement issued after Saturday's meeting has founded speculation on a possible Iraq-UN deal, the paper added.

The exchange rate of the dollar is likely to witness further setbacks as the government announced it would not do anything that might undermine the current economic developments and improve the dollar's rate. The statement on Saturday said the Iraqi dinar has not recovered its real value yet and its real value is worth much more what it is fetching now against the dollar.

The early shopping rush has obviously cooled down with most Iraqis preferring to wait and see as prices of basic commodities kept going down on an hour-by-hour basis. This week also witnessed a sharp drop in the prices of fruits and vegetables. The price of tomatoes, a basic ingredient of Iraqi meals, nose dived to around 30 dinars from around 300 dinars a kilo only two weeks ago. This is also true about potatoes which slipped from around 400 dinars a kilo to around 50 dinars.

Iraqis look stunned at the abundance of the goods available now. "Where have they all come from? Why should have we then suffered so much for a kilo of rice?" one old woman muttered as she elbowed her way in a crowded vegetable market in downtown Baghdad.

Most merchants and shopkeepers complain nobody is willing to buy. "There is a dearth in dinars. Everybody is tenacious to them." The notion that it is safer to keep goods and dollars instead of the dinar has suddenly been reversed. Everybody wishes he had kept as much locally-printed Iraqi dinars as possible. "I would have been a millionaire," said one man who sold his car early in January for six million dinars only to buy a better one for a little more in what at the time looked like a bargain.

Iraq: 'Optimism' in Dialogue With UN Noted

JN0802132196 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1025 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 8 Feb (INA) — The dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations has entered its third day amid an atmosphere of mutual optimism over the possibility of reaching a satisfactory agreement on the discussion points for the dialogue on selling oil to buy food and medicine and to meet the Iraqi people's humanitarian needs.

The strongest signal of this optimism was revealed in the statement issued after yesterday's Council of Ministers session, which was led by President Saddam Husayn. The Council voiced the hope that the dialogue will yield positive results.

The Iraqi officials' optimism coincided with optimism voiced by the parties involved in the dialogue, chief Iraqi negotiator Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari and UN spokeswoman Sylvana Foa, who said in a statement that the dialogue is "being conducted in a positive, practical atmosphere."

Arab and international officials continue to welcome the dialogue and the positive developments that characterize it. Turkey, Iraq's neighbor, said that it welcomes the dialogue because it will end the suffering of the Iraqi people caused by the embargo, which has been going on for more than five years. Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel said that Turkey welcomes any steps to end the difficulties facing Iraq.

The Foreign Ministry of Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, voiced a similar position. Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin said that "Baghdad's decision on contacts with the United Nations is a step in the right direction. We hope the current consultations will yield a positive result."

The Arab League General Secretariat also issued a statement expressing the hope that the "two parties will arrive at an acceptable formula that will enable Iraq to meet its needs and requirements." The Arab League said "it is concerned about Iraq's safety, sovereignty, and territorial integrity."

The Iraqi delegation is expected to present official documents to the UN delegation today. These documents express Iraq's positions on several issues and agenda items, including food, medicine, and other humanitarian needs. Meanwhile, Hans Corell, head of the UN delegation, will present the UN positions on some of the agenda items.

INA queried its sources, who are aware of the atmosphere in which the dialogue is taking place, and concluded that no obstacles were encountered in yesterday's sessions and that the dialogue has been constructive.

After the third session, which was held at 1530 New York time [2030 GMT] yesterday, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, chief of the Iraqi delegation, made a brief statement that said the dialogue sessions will continue Thursday.

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Iraq: Daily Denounces Perry's Statement on Threat to Region

JN0802143896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi newspaper AL-THAWRAH today denounced the statements made by U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry in which he noted that there is a continued Iraqi threat against the Gulf region and that the U.S. wants to topple the Iraqi regime in cooperation with Jordan and other states in the region.

The paper, which speaks for the ruling Ba'th Party, says: These statements, which are made every now and then by U.S. officials, and the false and silly allegations they contain do not surprise us. This is because we know very well that the Americans are trying to scare the Arab Gulf states of Iraq.

AL-THAWRAH notes that U.S. officials speak shamelessly about an Iraqi threat against the security and stability of the Arab Gulf states in order to maintain the U.S. military occupation of some of these states and continue to plunder their resources and milk them to the last petrodollar, as is the case with Kuwaiti and Saudi regimes.

According to the Iraqi newspaper AL-THAWRAH, the Americans seek to escalate their talk about the alleged Iraqi threat whenever they feel that there is a Gulf move to normalize ties with Iraq. The paper stresses that this normalization means there will be no need for U.S. military presence in the region.

Iraq: Oil Cooperation Agreement Signed With Russia

JN0702192796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1320 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Feb (INA)—Iraq and Russia have signed an agreement on oil cooperation in the field of training, promoting, and qualifying the oil cadres. The agreement was signed for Iraqi by Fa'iz 'Abdallah Shahin, under secretary of the Oil Ministry, and for Russia by Professor Alilij Vladimirov [name as transliterated], head of the state-run Russian Oil and Gas Academy, Aktin.

The agreement includes oil educational cooperation, the exchange of professors and teachers for the purposes of training and promoting the methods of teaching in the field of development and production of oil and gas fields, digging oil and gas wells, preserving the surrounding environment, the geology and geophysics of the oil fields and geophysical research on wells, the technology of refining oil and gas, and the oil production equipment.

The agreement also includes qualifying and promoting the oil cadres and the higher education students in Russian universities, exchanging experts and specialists to conduct scientific and applied research, and exchanging information.

Iraq: Delegation To Leave for Damascus for Euphrates Water Talks

JN0702174096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1120 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Feb (INA)—It was announced here today that an Iraqi technical delegation will leave for Damascus to attend meetings of the technical committee charged with examining the use of shared waters. The meetings will convene on Saturday [10 February] and will last one week.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, 'Abd-al-Sattar Salman Husayn, senior under secretary of the Ministry of Irrigation and head of the Iraqi delegation, which comprises specialists from the Ministries of Irrigation and Foreign Affairs, said that the conferees will discuss ways to reach a final agreement that details the shares of Euphrates waters for Iraq, Syria, and Turkey in accordance with the rules of international law regulating the use of the waters of shared international rivers.

Husayn added that the Iraqi delegation will raise the issue of the pollution of the Euphrates waters and its causes, because this inflicts grave harm on human life, not to mention the damage it causes to agricultural and industrial activities in the river basin. He went on to say that the delegation looks forward to cooperation with Turkey and Syria to avert such an eventuality.

When queried about Iraq's stand on Turkey's determination to build two new dams on the Euphrates, 'Abd-al-Sattar Salman Husayn said that this will only aggravate the damage caused to Iraq by Turkey's construction of dams on the Euphrates within the context of the so-called "Southeastern Anatolia Project." That is why Iraq once again expressed its opposition to the construction of such dams. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a memorandum in this regard to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in early January 1996.

Husayn added: In this memorandum, we reminded the Turkish side of the rules of international law, which require the states that plan to launch projects on a shared river to consult with the littoral states and to reach agreement with them before embarking on the implementation of such projects.

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Husayn went on to say: It is highly regrettable that Turkey surprises us from time to time with the construction of a new dam or project on the Euphrates without consulting Iraq and Syria.

Regarding the Turkish side's stand on the efforts to conclude a tripartite agreement among the three countries, the senior under secretary of the Ministry of Irrigation pointed out that the Turkish side has declared that it is not against the conclusion of a tripartite agreement. Nonetheless, it has set forth some criteria that would push the technical committee into a labyrinth of details and nuances, and this would only thwart the purposes for which the committee was formed in the first place. The Turkish side has disregarded the clear basic principles enshrined in international law, which spell out the commitments of the countries that share the use of the waters of an international river and facilitate the use of these waters through special agreements. These principles were lent further credence by their implementation, particularly since over 300 bilateral or multilateral agreements have been concluded among various world states to share the waters of international rivers. These agreements reflect situations similar to the one posed by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Of these agreements are the ones concluded to streamline the use of the waters of the Nile, Rhine, and Sind rivers.

The Iraqi official asserted that the Iraqi-Syrian meeting is not a substitute for a tripartite meeting that should bring together Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. He added that Iraq wants this meeting to serve as a step toward promoting cooperation between the three countries, and also toward accelerating the convening of such a tripartite meeting on the technical level to set the stage for meetings on higher levels with a view to reaching an urgent agreement to the satisfaction of the three sides. Such an agreement must promote the interests of the peoples of the three countries

Iraq: Saddam Husayn Addresses Cabinet Session on Economy

JN0702175296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1555 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Feb (INA)—The Council of Ministers hoped that the ongoing dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations on the oil-for-food formula will produce positive results.

During its seventh session for this year, which was presided over by His Excellency President Saddam Husayn, the council discussed the economic situation and the positive developments it has witnessed. The council underlined the importance of implementing the economic measures the state adopted in accordance with the principles and ideas enshrined in the letter President Saddam Husayn sent to the cabinet on 2 December 1995, saying that this letter must be viewed as an action plan for economic renaissance.

During the session, President Saddam Husayn addressed several issues pertaining to the economic situation in the aftermath of recent developments. He stressed the importance of seeing all Iraqis cross to safe shores with minimal pain so they may embark on an effort to improve on the present circumstances and build the future.

The president spoke about the relationship between the people and certain businessmen, including merchants, saying: You have heard me say under these circumstances and even before their inception that we were not satisfied with the relationship that developed between the people and certain businessmen, including merchants. Nonetheless, it is improper to generalize regardless of the number of merchants who behaved inappropriately. In the same vein, we cannot describe their conduct as entirely positive.

The president added: An unsatisfactory and painful relationship emerged between the two sides, because many merchants were taking advantage of the people's vulnerabilities regardless of the pains they caused them. What pains me is a phenomenon that is both funny and painful at the same time. For we have begun to hear of people expressing their happiness malevolently over what has befallen merchants and economic institutions. This is taking place in front of stores and economic institutions. This is not a pleasant thing to see. But who is responsible for it?.

The president continued: We can safely say that the people are not responsible for this development in the relationship between the two sides. This development is unpleasant because it would nullify a friendly relationship between citizens and many businessmen. Nonetheless, time and improved behavior could remedy this situation. It is our hope that businessmen would heal the wounds caused by circumstances, the creation of which was made possible by some of them. They have to make an effort to bridge the gap between them and the people to make it easy for the people to demonstrate a positive and cooperative attitude and thus help narrow this gap as soon as possible. We do not want our people to make the crossing to safe shores and leave merchants behind, just as we do not want our merchants to make the crossing to safe shores and leave our people behind. In the same vein, we do not want our military personnel to make the crossing to safe shores and leave our civilian population behind, just as we do not want our civilian population to make the crossing to safe shores and leave

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our Armed Forces behind. We want to make the crossing to safe shores with the entire people, who are our greatest asset, after relying on God, who is our greatest support in our efforts to continue our march, promote it, and render it a success, God willing, in all areas. It is sublime values and accomplishments that will emerge triumphant.

President Saddam Husayn also said: The image of the future should be present before our eyes because while we interact with the present, our thought, vision, concerns, and feelings focus on the future. But if sweeping circumstances create direct factors resulting in a major delay in the march, we should not preoccupy ourselves with the details of the future without seriously considering the present.

He added: Our address to the Council of Ministers included two aspects: The aspect of the present that goes into the future through suppositions, most of which may be right and part of which may be wrong. What is important, however, is how to deal with the present situation, that is, how to remedy the damage when we reap the positive aspect, which may take place wholly through our revenues or through these revenues and other factors. When we reap the positive aspect, we have to remedy the negative aspect. What is this negative aspect? He who has a dollar now in his pocket will lose nothing. If someone had bought certain services and commodities with a dollar, he would have lost nothing because the dollar's value, which reached 3,000 dinars as a result of both the realistic and false factors of life, used to buy certain types of commodities and services and now can buy the same types of commodities and services, although the current value of the dollar is now 400 dinars.

President Saddam Husayn also said: So, this person did not lose anything. He who had dinars and did not exchange them into dollars would win. He who had goods, whose price was 2 million dinars and whose current price is half a million dinars, would also lose nothing. If he wanted to use the goods, he could do so, and if he wanted to sell the goods, he would get with half a million dinars, the current price of the goods, commodities and services, whose price was more than two million dinars before the increase in the dinar's value. Those who have lost were set to lose because they had imagined that such a day would not come. These are the ones who speculated with half a million dinars, for example, and they are now speculating with less than that amount. The Council of Ministers then adopted several directives pertaining to the economic situation to ensure the continuation of its positive aspects.

Iraq: 2,350 'Huge Trucks' To Transfer Food Supplies From Ports

JN0702152396 Baghdad INA in English 1120 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 7, INA—Iraq's Ministry of Transport and Communications prepared the fleet of the land transport trucks to transfer food stuffs and humanitarian needs which would arrive to Iraq's ports on the Arab Gulf.

General Director of the Land Transport General Company Sami al- Mashhadani told INA that the company has prepared 2,350 huge trucks which affiliated to the private and social companies of land transport. He explained that a committee for administrating the processes of the transport was formed in the branch of the company in al- Basrah Province, south Iraq, in coordination with the ministry and the concerned sides to follow up the process. He added that the branches of the company in the provinces and abroad are ready to transfer any quantity of goods and food stuff. The company has also formed following-up teams, permanent and auto-mobile workshops to repair and maintain the trucks and transfer the food stuffs as soon as possible.

The general director said that they had fulfilled communications with a number of international companies which are specialized in manufacturing trucks to modernize the fleet and importing additional trucks. Acting director of al-Badiyah Company for General Transport told INA that 600 trucks have been prepared for transferring the food stuffs which are expected to arrive to Iraqi ports. He pointed out to repairing and maintaining more trucks to increase the capacity of the transport.

Iraq: Ration Card System To Remain in Force After Embargo Ends

JN0702155896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1300 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Feb (INA)—Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih, minister of trade, said that his ministry will continue to use the ration card system even after the revocation of the unfair embargo clamped on Iraq.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, the minister added that the system has been in force upon the instructions of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn since the imposition of the unfair embargo on the Iraqi people. He maintained that this system will remain in force.

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Iraq: Kurdish Autonomous Areas To Be Supplied With Electricity

JN0702164696 Baghdad INA in English 1330 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 7, INA--Iraq's Ministry of Industry and Minerals expressed its readiness to supply electric power to all the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan which are suffering of lack of power. A source in the ministry said that the staff of the electric sector had reconnected the national electric net to guarantee the electric current arrival to all places in the Autonomous Region. The source added that the ministry's staff had accomplished the repairing of the electric lines which had been damaged and overcome the causes of the frequent shortage in the electric power. The electric sector had already restored the electric power to Dahuk Province last August following the destruction of the electric lines.

Iraq: Government Sends Food Supplies to Kurdish Autonomous Region

JN0702165896 Baghdad INA in English 1430 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 7, INA—A convoy of five trucks loaded with foodstuffs arrived earlier this week at the northern region of Kurdistan, a local daily has reported. The convoy which carries items of the ration card was received with pleasure by Kurdish people. People of the region told INA correspondent in Ninawa Province that foodstuffs will be distributed to people through food agents.

Early on Wednesday, a convey of five trucks loaded with foodstuff left Karkuk heading north to autonomous region of Irbil. INA correspondent in al-Ta'mim Province said the shipments of food sent by the Iraqi Red Crescent included lentils, rice, and cooking oil. Earlier, the society sent five trucks loaded with lentils to al-Sulaymaniyah Province as part of its efforts to ensure Kurdish people with basic necessities of life.

Iraq: Foreign Minister al-Sahhaf Confers With PLO's Qaddumi

JN0702190096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1714 GMT 7 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Feb (INA)—Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf today met with Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, currently visiting the country.

During the meeting, al-Sahhaf stressed the need to make joint efforts to coordinate positions in a way that serves the Arab nation and its consistent pan-Arab interests. He discussed the great fruitful results Iraq is achieving in the domestic construction process, particularly in the economic field, in order to confront the effects of the unjust blockade. He also discussed the achievements realized, thanks to the wise economic program worked out by President Saddam Husayn.

Qaddumi discussed the Palestine question, its recent developments, and their repercussions on inter-Arab relations. He also lauded Iraq's pan-Arab positions on the Palestine question, and admired the progress Iraq has achieved in all fields and Iraq's confrontation of the unjust blockade imposed on it.

Qaddumi expressed hope that the efforts Iraq is making to end this blockade will succeed. The meeting was attended by the Palestinian charge d'affaires in Baghdad.

Iraq: Deputy PM 'Aziz Confers With PLO's Qaddumi

JN0702211296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2035 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Feb (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today met with Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, and the delegation accompanying him.

They discussed the current Arab situation, particularly developments in the Palestinian arena. They also stressed the importance of solidarity between the national and pan-Arab forces in confronting the dangers and challenges threatening the Palestine question in particular and the Arab nation in general.

The meeting was attended by Sakhr Abu-Nizar, member of the PLO Executive Office; the Palestinian charge d'affaires in Baghdad; and the head of the Arab Liberation Movement Office at the Revolution Command Council.

Iraq: Paper Calls Radio Monte Carlo 'Mercenary'

JN0702194596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0900 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Feb (INA)—An Iraqi paper described Radio Monte Carlo as a mercenary radio, which sells its role and services to whoever pays more. This made Arab public opinion look at this radio station with disdain and disregard. This came in AL-JUMHURIYAH editorial written by Chief Editor Salah al- Mukhtar under the headline "Are Monte Carlo's Hallucinations a Mistake or the Last Tango in Hell?"

AL-JUMHURIYAH says: Radio Monte Carlo is the ugly face, chosen years ago to carry out the tasks of radio stations that were hostile to the Arabs and

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Muslims. This radio station presents, every now and then, evidence of this through its sole reporting of false stories about Iraq.

The paper reviews in its article some of these anti-Iraq stands, noting its coverage of the alleged story about the Abu Ghurayb rebellion on 14 June and its insistence on this despite the denial of all Iraqi and foreign sources.

The paper points out as another example of this radio's stands its sole broadcast of a strange report on the health of President Saddam Husayn. The radio broadcasted a fabricated report by its correspondent in London that the president is ill. The radio also added to this report a long report on the disease, its effects, the doctors in charge of treatment, and other effects imagined by the radio. After pouring out its grudge and meanness, the radio questioned the relation between the disease and Iraq's acceptance of Resolution 986.

The paper adds: Radio Monte Carlo does not commit unintentional mistakes; it commits clear, premeditated errors that cannot be denied, particularly since it enthusiastically presents false information and implicitly defends them. The paper says that this radio has become a mercenary radio that sells its role and services to whoever pays more now that it has lost credibility and it has become certain that it serves clear Zionist and colonialist objectives.

AL-JUMHURIYAH asks: Why did Radio Monte Carlo, not the BBC or the VOA, broadcast the report? The paper says: The BBC and the VOA have become professional in fabricating facts and insulting Iraq. Therefore, their effect on Iraqi and Arab public opinion is limited compared to Radio Monte Carlo, known for its positive relations with Iraq before the aggression [against Iraq in 1991]. The paper says that the anti-Iraq forces in the region and the world decided to use this radio station to disseminate fake news against Iraq so that they can be propagated and accepted easily because they are broadcast by persons known for their sympathy with Iraq.

The paper says that the role played by Radio Monte Carlo is dirtier and worse than the roles of the BBC, the VOA, and the Israeli Radio, owned by parties and countries which openly adopt policies that are hostile to the Arabs and Muslims.

The paper ridicules this radio's pretended innocence of the practices of the radio stations which are well-known for their hostility to the Arab nation and the Muslims. The paper adds that when it was really tested during the Mother of Battles, this radio station proved to be cheaper than the other hostile radio stations and parties.

It adds that before 1990, Radio Monte Carlo used to try to improve its relations with the Arab countries and to broadcast programs on these countries and their achievements in a neutral and objective manner. It was natural that this tactic gave it a better position with the Arab citizens. It says that this radio, which is of French affiliation, used to be paid to broadcast these programs. However, to be paid for broadcasting positive Arab phenomena, made it an attractive radio in which the Arab circles have confidence in comparison to the BBC, Voice of America, and the Israeli Radio.

It adds that this radio was tested when Iraq entered Kuwait. It began to reveal its suspicious links that are hostile to the Arabs and Muslims in spite of all deceptive methods. This radio began to compete with the hostile radios that are known to distort facts, and fabricate and spread lies with the aim of isolating Iraq in preparation for striking it and trying to destroy its national entity as a prelude to impose a new black colonialism on the whole region.

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Israel: Peres, Christopher Hold News Conference

TA0702172696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1624 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Joint news conference by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv — live, in English with superimposed translation into Hebrew; transcribed from the English; indistinct passages due to superimposed translation]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Peres] Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very glad to welcome Secretary Christopher upon his return from Damascus. I do believe that he has had before him one of the most delicate missions in modern diplomacy, and he has returned with what I would consider a real success [words indistinct]. In addition to the official channels between the different parties, there is also a flow of information, and it was quite easy for the Syrian side to misread what's happening here, and the misreading that could have caused the interruption in the negotiations [words indistinct] a balanced and objective picture, and in a very convincing way he reassured that the peace negotiations will be continued, that time will not be wasted no matter what will take place in our country or elsewhere concerning the internal situation.

I must say that I personally am much relieved, because I speak for a government which is sincerely and seriously interested in the peace negotiations, in its overall concept [words indistinct] effort to bring an end to the war, to bring an end to conflict, to create a new relationship with Syria and Lebanon.

I want to repeat again that our own experience shows that whenever you negotiate there are ups and downs and interruptions and suspicions. It is not a honeymoon [words indistinct] and I think that the secretary was able to bridge over one of those important crises, and I feel very much encouraged that we can continue the negotiations with full respect to the other side and with a serious mind toward the results of it. We shall continue, I hope, to negotiate on all domains — security, economy, improved relations, comprehensive negotiations — and no time will be wasted. There is still a great deal of work before us, but I think that the greatest hope both for Syria and Israel is to go over from a strategic confrontation to economic competition or economic cooperation [words indistinct] I would like both to thank the secretary and to welcome him back to Israel.

[Christopher] Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much. We had an opportunity to have a good discussion of my visit to Damascus and my meeting with President al-Asad. We also discussed my meeting this morning in Gaza with Chairman 'Arafat. With respect to my meeting yesterday in Syria and the Syria-Israeli track, let me make three brief points: First, the announcement that I made that the meetings would go forward in the Wye Plantation at the end of this month in the customary framework was, I believe, a commitment on behalf of both of the parties to the continuity of the process [words indistinct]; second, the decision taken by the two parties reflects a commitment on behalf of both of them to the goal of reaching an agreement in 1996; and third, I want to stress that the United States will continue to do everything that it can to assist the parties to achieve that goal. Under our auspices the negotiations will go forward, and we are determined to be as helpful as we possibly can be to the parties. That's what President Clinton intends and certainly that's what the people of Israel and the people of Syria deserve. Thank you very much.

Israel: Peres Tells Christopher Elections Set for 28 May

TA0802053696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says that, in fact, the forthcoming general elections will take place on 28 May. Diplomatic sources say Peres made his decision known yesterday evening in his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Peres repeated to reporters yesterday that he would not make a public statement until next week on whether an early ballot will take place. The Americans have asked the Israeli premier to wait and not make an official announcement right after the secretary of state leaves the region.

Peres is to meet today with the Labor Party team on the issue of the date of the early elections.

[A related report on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 8 February adds that the "team will propose to the prime minister two dates for early elections: 21 and 28 May. Labor sources said, however, that the party will not object to holding the elections on 4 June, a date which is being also discussed with Knesset factions."]

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Israeli 'Sources' Satisfied With Christopher Preventing Crisis

TA0702192096 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jerusalem sources this evening expressed satisfaction with the fact that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has prevented a crisis in the negotiations with Syria. Today Christopher met Yasir 'Arafat in Gaza. The head of the Palestinian Authority asked Christopher to pressure Israel on the issue of the release of the Palestinian prisoners and land confiscation in East Jerusalem. Later Christopher came to Tel Aviv in order to brief the prime minister. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that contrary to Peres' position, the Americans believe that the talks should be accelerated. [passage omitted]

[Begin Peres recording] There was indeed a danger that the talks would grind to a halt. Let me recall that there have been two breaks in the past. I know that it is easy to stop and hard to resume the talks, therefore I was glad there was no need to stop and that it will be possible to continue. I made no promises or commitments, nor was I required to give any commitments. We did what we wanted to do, namely, to hold negotiations without preconditions or any restrictions. [end recording]

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 7 February includes a related report adding: "A source who is close to the negotiations with Syria today assessed that until the Israeli elections, the negotiations with Syria will be held on a back burner and no dramatic decisions should be expected. This was said in anticipation of the completion of Secretary Christopher's shuttle in the region."]

Israel: Disagreement With U.S. Over Syria Policy on Hizballah

TA0802103196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 8 Feb 96 pp A1, A2

[Report by Aluf Ben and Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A disagreement has emerged between the United States and Israel over their assessment of the situation in south Lebanon. The U.S. Administration is of the opinion that Syria recently decided to rein Hizballah in and demanded that it curb its attacks. In contrast, Israeli officials believe that there has been no change in the situation in south Lebanon and that the attacks on the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the SLA [South Lebanese Army] are continuing.

In a briefing to journalists in Tel Aviv three weeks ago, a senior U.S. diplomat said that "a significant drop" in the military activity in south Lebanon had been attained due to Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's intervention. The U.S. diplomat even praised the Syrians for demanding that Hizballah curb its activities and asking nothing in return from the United States or Israel.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher raised the question of Lebanon in his talks in Israel this week. In response, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq told him that there has been no change for the better in south Lebanon. Shahaq cited serious terrorist efforts in recent weeks, such as last week's car-bomb explosion, which could have caused numerous casualties.

A senior government source told HA'ARETZ yesterday that there were 42 attacks and attempted attacks of all types against the IDF and the SLA in the security zone in January and another seven or eight attacks in the SLA-controlled Jazzin enclave. In December, there were 57 attacks and attempted attacks, while in January 1995 there were 36 attacks.

According to this source, the Israeli professional level has no evidence of a decline in terrorist activity in south Lebanon or of measures taken by the Syrians to calm down the situation there. There were four lulls in the attacks in January: two during the Wye Plantation talks, one during Christopher's previous visit, and one that is unexplained (from 22 to 28 January). This has led Israeli sources to the conclusion that the Syrians do not want attacks when the peace talks are in session but that their basic policy has not changed.

The Americans are convinced that the Syrians decided to curtail Hizballah's freedom of action in south Lebanon and reached an agreement with Iran to the effect that Hizballah will become a political party in Lebanon in the future. U.S. officials even claimed that the evaluation they received from Israeli analysts about the situation in Lebanon was more positive than the public pronouncements made by senior Israeli officials.

According to reports reaching Israel, the U.S. Administration has various evaluations about the rationale behind the Syrian policy toward Hizballah. U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk believes that al- Asad decided to curb the terror in Lebanon as a positive gesture in the peace process and consequently sent Foreign Minister al-Shar' to Beirut to notify it of Syria's desire to calm down the situation.

In contrast, administration officials in Washington estimate that the steps were designed to increase Syria's

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control over Hizballah and stemmed from Syrian considerations rather than from any U.S. or Israeli demands.

Hizballah is currently trying to find independent sources for the supply of weapons that do not hinge on Damascus' approval. This would allow it to continue the attacks even if Syria and Israel reach a peace agreement. The Iranian Government has been pressuring Lebanon and Syria for a long time to allow Iran Air planes to land at the Beirut airport so that the weapons can be delivered directly to Hizballah without going through Damascus first. Lebanon and Syria, however, have turned down the Iranian request.

A large shipment of weapons and ammunition was confiscated about two weeks ago on the Turkish-Syrian border; three trucks managed to get through, while six were stopped. Israeli sources estimate that the weapons were intended for Hizballah, but others believe that they were intended for the PKK [Workers Party of Kurdistan], the Kurdish underground operating against Turkey.

Eytan Rabin adds:

[Passage omitted] Sources in the Northern Command said that an escalation in terrorist activity against the IDF and the SLA has been noted in recent days. According to them, the terrorists are once again firing from inside and from the outskirts of villages. The sources stressed that the IDF and the SLA have clear orders not to direct their fire at the villages except under extraordinary circumstances.

Analysts argue that there is close cooperation between Hizballah, Amal, and the Palestinian groups opposed to the peace process and that there are constant warnings about attempts to infiltrate car bombs into the security zone, kidnap soldiers, and attack SLA officers.

Israel: IAI on Canceled U.S. Deal; Defense Ties Resume With France

TA0802120096

[FBIS Report] A report by Steve Rodan on page 8 of Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 8 February notes: "Israel Aircraft Industries [IAI] does not expect to be significantly affected by the Pentagon's cancellation of a $4.3 billion program that included IAI's Hunter two-engine drone, company sources said yesterday. "One senior source said a 'number of clients are interested in the Hunter and there are advanced negotiations.' The source declined to elaborate. "Sources said the cancellation would not immediately affect manpower at IAI's unmanned reconnaissance vehicle division." "IAI executives refused to issue a formal response to the cancellation, saying it was a US decision."

Writing on page C5 of Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 8 February, Sharon Sade quotes Israeli security sources as saying that "it is highly likely that the U.S. decision stemmed from its fear of entrusting the supply of what the Americans consider a major weapons system to a foreign supplier."

Sade goes on to say that "France will buy five Hunters from Israel as part of a deal that will total millions of dollars. Israeli and French representatives signed the contract three weeks ago, after the French lifted the freeze on the deal." Sade writes that the freeze was imposed as a result of "pressure from French industries and France's disappointment over Israel's decision to call off a deal to buy certain weapons from it."

Writing on page 12 of Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 8 February, On Levy reports that strategic consultations have resumed between Israel and France. "Two days of high-level consultations concluded yesterday in a meeting between Defense Minister Shim'on Peres and Jean Claude Mallet, head of the Strategic Affairs Staff of the French Defense Ministry. Peres expressed satisfaction at the resumption of defense ties."

Israel: Baraq Hopes Syria Talks To Go Until Elections, Doubts Summit

TA0802115496 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 8 Feb 96 p 3

[ITIM report]

[FBIS Translated Text] "I very much hope that even if there are early elections in Israel, the talks with the Syrians will continue until the closest day possible to the elections and will resume immediately afterward," Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq stated yesterday in response to the announcement issued in Damascus about the resumption of the Maryland talks on 26 February. Baraq was replying to questions by journalists at the end of his meeting with the Swedish foreign minister.

Baraq estimated that a Lebanese delegation will not join the talks at this stage. "I don't think the issue is currently on the agenda," he said. "Obviously, at some point, if and when the talks resume, we will expect a Syrian green light to the Lebanese Government to enter negotiations with us." He pointed out that Israel will insist that the negotiations on Lebanese issues be conducted only with the Lebanese Government.

The foreign minister was asked about the possibility of a summit meeting with his Syrian counterpart Faruq al-

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Shar' or between Prime Minister Peres and President al-Asad. Baraq curtly replied: "All in good time." For their part, political sources estimated yesterday that there are no longer any chances of a senior political level Israeli-Syrian meeting and that such a summit will be possible only after the elections in Israel and the United States.

Baraq also addressed the Palestinian track of the talks, reiterating the position that if the Palestinian Charter is not canceled, the negotiations on the permanent arrangement will be delayed. "I find it hard to see how negotiations on the permanent arrangement can even begin if the charter is not canceled or amended. Therefore, we should not split hairs about the way this is done. As far as Israel is concerned, what counts most is the end result," Baraq asserted.

Israel: Press Reviews Analysis, Officials' Statements on Syria Talks

TA0802072396

[FBIS Report] Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0505 GMT on 8 February carries a report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz, saying that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres "says he was relieved to learn that the talks with the Syrians will continue. Secretary of State Christopher says peace can be achieved by the end of 1996 and stresses the economic dimension of a possible Israeli-Syrian agreement, the U.S. role being to explore the parties' wishes in the economic field.

"Peres and Christopher expressed optimism at the conclusion of the shuttle tour, but Jerusalem has received reports marring the jubilation. Only a few days ago, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' told the ambassador of a very important country that Syria does not want regional economic cooperation, which would entail, among other things, a free trade zone in which Syria is not interested. It would be interesting to learn how this fits in with the fact that the U.S. deputy secretary of agriculture stayed behind in Damascus to promote economic issues. Al-Shar' further reiterated that the Syrian demand to return to the 4 June 1967 border is nonnegotiable.

"Christopher says an agreement can be achieved by the end of 1996, but most senior Israeli officials estimated in conversations with foreign leaders that a year to a year and a half will elapse before an Israeli-Syrian agreement materializes."

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 8 February reports that in reaction to Raz's report, "Minister Yosi Sarid says that he does not share the assessment that the negotiations with Syria are deadlocked. He believes the contrary to be true. President al-Asad's willingness to resume the Maryland talks despite the early election plans attests to Syria's commitment to the peace process. Speaking to our correspondent this morning, Minister Sarid said this strengthens his belief that a peace agreement with Syria can be achieved this year, provided two tough problems are resolved: the water issue and the Golan withdrawal line."

Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 8 February carries a report by political correspondent Udi Segal, adding: "Discussions on the security arrangements will continue at the Maryland talks, which are due to resume this month, but the truly tough issues, such as early warning stations, the thinning out of armies, and demilitarization, will not be addressed. Instead, a series of technical issues, which are politically simpler for Israel, will be discussed: coordination between the armies, hot lines, and a coordination mechanism.

"Prime Minister Shim'on Peres intends to instruct the delegation not to discuss the Golan withdrawal or the border issue throughout the pre-election period during which the sides will pursue slow negotiations, addressing the rest of the issues which are not likely to set off political storms before the early elections."

Segal's report includes a recorded passage in which Itamar Rabinovich, Israeli ambassador to the United States, says: "I assume President al-Asad and those negotiating on his behalf will not try to press on with issues on which they realize we can hardly make progress during this politically complex and volatile period."

Segal adds that at the Peres-Christopher news conference in Tel Aviv on 7 February, he had asked Peres whether he "had promised al- Asad, through Christopher, that the border and withdrawal issues will be part of the discussions during the pre-election period." In a recorded passage, Peres replies: "I promised nothing, and I neither made any commitments nor was required to make any."

The same IDF Radio newsreel carries a live telephone interview with Interior Minister Hayim Ramon by correspondent 'Oded Ben-'Ami, who asks Ramon if he can confirm that Peres and al-Asad agreed, through Christopher, "to continue the negotiations but not to reach any agreements until the next government is set up." Ramon replies: "There is no agreement to disagree; there is agreement to make as much progress as possible. We must remember that even objectively, these negotiations are far from simple."

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Israel: Dayan Says New Charter Acceptable Even With Statehood Clause

TA0802104296 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 8 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Arye Dayan]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Palestinian Authority recently appointed a team of Palestinian lawyers and jurists to formulate a constitution that will replace the Palestinian Charter, which the Palestinians undertook to cancel as part of the interim agreement with Israel. The preamble to the constitution will explicitly state that the current Palestinian Charter is thereby canceled. The legal team, whose establishment has so far been kept secret, has already begun working. [passage omitted]

Israel will regard the endorsement of such a constitution as fulfilling the Palestinian commitment to cancel the charter. "We made it clear to the Palestinians that we are demanding that they cancel the charter without any tricks or subterfuges," Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan told DAVAR RISHON yesterday. "We will not accept a decision that will only implicitly cancel the charter. We demand an explicit cancellation. If they adopt a new charter with a clause explicitly stating that the previous charter is canceled, that will suffice and we will see it as fulfilling their commitment. I believe such a decision will have a major educational value."

Replying to a question about the inclusion in the future charter of a clause in support of the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, Dayan said that "the goals of the Palestinians are known to us, just as they are aware of ours. If they want to detail their goals, that is their business. We will only insist that these goals not mention the annihilation of Zionism or the destruction of Israel."

According to Dayan, the Palestinians understand that Israel will not continue to implement the interim agreement and launch negotiations on the permanent arrangement if the charter is not canceled. At the same time, Dayan asserted that the evacuation of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops from Hebron and its environs does not depend on the cancellation of the charter.

The interim agreement stipulates that Hebron will be evacuated by the end of March, whereas the target date for the cancellation of the charter is the end of April. "We will pull out of Hebron according to our commitment," Dayan promised.

Israel: PNC's Amending of Charter Viewed as 'Nightmare'

TA0702160796 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 7 Feb 96 p B1

[Commentary by Gid'on Samet: "The Large Elections Mine"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The future looks quite bright for Shim'on Peres' troops, and bringing the elections forward improves their situation. There is, however, one large land mine along the road. This mine is not the new bloc being worked out by Netanyahu and Eytan nor the stalemate in the talks with Syria — seeing that Labor is better off going to the elections with no concessions having been made yet on the Golan Heights. The mine is being held by 'Arafat, and he too would have preferred to be rid of it.

Perhaps the one striking fault in the Oslo B accord lies in the clause dealing with the amendment of the Palestinian National Charter. Chapter 5 Clause 31 (9) deals with the problematic issue. It says that within two months of the Palestinian Council's election in the territories the Palestine National Council [PNC] should convene to endorse the necessary amendments in regard to [last three words in English] the charter. The PLO Executive Committee met two days ago on this issue, and this meeting has already exuded a very unpleasant odor.

An important member of the newly elected council said that if he votes in favor of the amendment "may his hand be chopped off." Hanan 'Ashrawi made the necessary changes conditional on sovereignty first. The representatives of the Democratic and Popular Fronts totally boycotted the session. The PNC secretary has rejected the Israeli demand (it is not a demand but rather an unequivocal clause in the agreement!), claiming that it contravenes UN resolutions and making other dubious excuses of this sort.

The new council has not been officially convened yet; therefore, the counting of the two months has not begun yet. 'Arafat has promised to convene the PNC soon, but he is dealing with problematic customers. The PNC secretary "ruled out the possibility" of convening this body in the next few months. Faruq Qaddumi, who boycotted the Executive Committee session, and other opposition members this week vehemently criticized the very plan to convene the PNC.

Thus starts Peres' taxing journey toward this difficult decision under a very tight timetable that he himself made more difficult with his decision to bring the elections forward. There is no other issue — except for terror attacks, God forbid — that can sway the results of the elections more than a failure to amend the charter.

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Because of this, 'Arafat is holding the Israeli political establishment (and himself as well) where it really hurts.

The stormy elections campaign will quickly reach its zenith in May, at which time we are still likely to hear fairy tales about the Palestinians' difficulties in fulfilling their commitment, first in the Executive Committee (which has not completed its clarifications), then in the elected council, and later in the PNC. According to a commitment made by Peres and his main spokesmen — reasonable enough in itself — the entire process will grind to a halt if the charter's clauses are not amended on time.

Our part in this bungle is not insignificant. Israel has not settled for the letter addressed by 'Arafat on 9 September 1993 to Yitzhaq Rabin stating that "the PLO confirms that the Palestinian National Charter clauses (...) are henceforth impracticable and invalid." In addition to this statement, which would have solved the problem without need for a complicated process, Israel demanded that the changes be submitted for "official endorsement by the PNC."

One can understand the desire to stick to details, but not the shortsightedness. After all, those who are familiar with the agreement should have foreseen what happened and what is yet in store for us: The way the Palestinian extremists will grab us by the throat — whether early elections are called or not — and demand additional concessions as a condition for amending the charter and thus providing Peres with several more Knesset seats.

The nightmare of the charter's amendment has just started. Due to the shortened political timetable, a quick and bold decision is called for. Like all the other agreements with the Palestinians, it too must be based on a sober weighing of interests. Israel would do better to strive for an agreement with 'Arafat on a general formula similar in nature to the one included in his letter (and an additional letter he sent in 4 May 1994), to be approved not by the PNC but rather by the elected council or a drastically narrowed PNC — which basically amounts to the same thing as the elected council.

What will we get out of changing the charter the hard way — a thing that in any case is unlikely to materialize? Will this ensure peace for Israel? Will this constitute renewed Palestinian recognition of Israel? A bird in the hand is worth two in the high tree onto which we have climbed.

Experts on Palestinian politics assure me that 'Arafat himself would prefer such an arrangement to getting entangled in a complicated and uncertain process. They add that he is no less capable of making this procedural change than of completing the entire process in the PNC within the approaching deadline.

The condition for this is that we accept at this stage what we will have to accept in any case during the torturous process in which the PNC reaches its decision. In the Oslo B accord, we promised — and are yet to fulfill this promise — to provide free passage between Gaza and the West Bank; to release most of the male and female prisoners; and to withdraw from Hebron. Those who worked out the Oslo A and B accords should be able to reach a new understanding regarding the charter — as one of the careful formulators tried to hint in the accord.

It should not be too difficult to explain this decision to the Israeli public, which will otherwise have to anxiously wait for the PNC until the arrival of the messiah or until Labor loses the elections — whichever comes first.

Israel: Peres Mentions 28 May as Possible Election Date

TA0702123896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Labor ministers met in the Knesset this morning to discuss the question of early elections, while the leaders of Likud and Tzomet are currently convened at Likud headquarters in Tel Aviv in a bid to finalize the memorandum of understanding about running together in the upcoming elections. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports:

[Nir] Addressing the Labor ministers, Shim'on Peres described the partnership between Likud and Tzomet as a lamentable match. People in the right are constantly getting married, Peres said. He then told a story about a woman who frequently changed husbands. A neighbor came up to her mother and said to her: So many husbands; your daughter really does you proud. So much for the joking.

Moving on to Labor matters, he became serious and proceeded to outline what appears to be Labor's election campaign line, at least in the near future. First of all, he called on the ministers to present a united front and not to criticize each other. We must appear state-like rather than partisan, Peres said. We must present the government's achievements to the people; not just the peace, but also that peace spells economic growth and prosperity. We should emphasize that Jerusalem is Israel's eternal capital, never to divided again. Seeking to repel the Likud's claims concerning Jerusalem, Peres said: Let nobody talk about possibilities that have not been discussed or proposals on which no decision has yet been made.

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Referring to the negotiations with the Syrians, the prime minister said: The position we must present to the public is that we are talking about a comprehensive peace agreement with almost all the Arab countries and that the depth of the withdrawal on the Golan will be tantamount to the depth of the peace.

Another important point is the status quo on religious issues, Peres said. We must treat the religious population respectfully, not discriminate against them, particularly when it comes to housing, which is the most troubling issue for the ultra-Orthodox community.

Incidentally, Peres tasked Ministers Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer and Yosi Beilin to draw a five-year plan to solve the housing problem of the ultra-Orthodox community. In his meeting with Peres earlier this week, Minister Yosi Sarid told him that Meretz will oppose the construction of any additional housing beyond the Green Line. Sarid was referring to the construction of Matityahu, an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood in the settlement of Qiryat Sefer which is located 1 km beyond the Green Line in the Modi'in area.

Back to the meeting of the Labor ministers, Peres said he will announce his decision on early elections on 15 February, and that if he decides to bring them forward they will be held on 28 May.

The Labor ministers decided to set up a team that will deal with the issue of early elections made up of Ministers Hayim Ramon, Moshe Shahal, and David Liba'i, party secretary Nisim Zvili, and faction chairman Ra'anan Kohen. The team will deal with the legislative and technical aspects of the issue and will enter negotiations with other parties about the final date.

In sum, Peres did not announce his decision to bring the elections forward but the establishment of the new team attests to his intentions.

Israel: Likud, Tzomet Initial Agreement on Joint List

TA0802122396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu and Tzomet leader Refa'el Eytan a short while ago initialed an agreement to run on a joint list in the next elections. Speaking at the signing ceremony in Tel Aviv, Netanyahu said the agreement represents a turnabout in the right-wing camp, which has been afflicted by numerous rifts in recent years.

Refa'el Eytan called for an election campaign devoid of personal slander. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Knesset Member Eytan apologized to the reporters he insulted in the course of the Tzomet faction meeting earlier today.

Israel: Likud, Tzomet MKs Critical of Joint List Decision

TA0602141896 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 6 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Liat Collins]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MKs [Knesset members] from both the Likud and Tzomet yesterday expressed criticism of their parties' decision to form a joint Knesset list. 'Ovadya 'Eli threatened to resign over the issue. "It does not serve the Likud in its main aim of bringing (Binyamin) Netanyahu to the prime minister's post," 'Eli said.

Although he was the most vocal among the Likud critics of the deal, he was not the only one to question it. Me'ir Shitrit said he would not resign over it, but he considers the agreement to be detrimental. "It might be good at giving the feeling of unity, but if Refa'el Eytan were really interested in that, he should have just withdrawn his bid for the premiership without any preconditions," he said.

"Netanyahu and the Likud could win this election without any favors from Eytan. Surveys even show that Tzomet's power is declining. And if there has to be an agreement, (why) put (Tzomet MK) Hayim Dayan before (the Likud's) Sha'ul 'Amor? For half the price we could have made an agreement with David Levi, who's our flesh and blood." He said Levi's new party and Moledet could be the ones to gain from the pact. Shitrit also condemned the fact he first heard of the agreement from media reports.

David Mena' said the deal would push Likud candidates into positions too far down the Knesset list.

Yosi Ahime'ir said he is not confident of the accuracy of the results of the polls showing the Likud would significantly benefit from the deal.

Other Likud MKs were more optimistic. Dan Tikhon said that in the short term some Likud MKs were worried about the agreement, but it would pay off on election day. Ari'el Weinstein praised the agreement, saying it would "put the Likud back on the map and put Netanyahu back in the picture." Eytan presented the agreement to a meeting of the Tzomet Knesset faction and party elders last night.

Although most Likud MKs said they had been completely in the dark about the deal, some 30 Tzomet members were aware of it before the news broke Sunday, apparently from a Likud leak. Tzomet's party council

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had authorized continued negotiations with the Likud 10 days ago.

Some Tzomet MKs, however, are urging extreme caution in signing a deal with the Likud, basing themselves largely on the experience of the last Histadrut elections, in which they believe they were sold out after making an agreement with the Likud candidate.

MK Pini Badash, one of the few Tzomet MKs willing to speak to reporters on the record, criticized the agreement warning that it could affect Tzomet's independence. After the meeting with Eytan, Badash apparently retracted the criticism, having been convinced the deal did not involve a merger between the two parties and each would be able to go its own way after the elections.

Sources in Tzomet rejected the claim by some Likud MKs that Tzomet MKs would move over to a coalition with Labor if it returns to power. "Theoretically, we could leave for another party," said one, "But it's extremely unlikely. It would look too bad."

Moledet leader Rehav'am Ze'evi was noncommittal, calling for national unity but sarcastically noting the two parties would not want him in on such a deal, because "I'm too nationalistic."

David Levi said he believes his party would benefit from voters dissatisfied with the Tzomet deal.

Meretz MK Beni Temkin joked with dissatisfied Likud MKs: "If that's the generosity Netanyahu shows in making deals, it's lucky he's not negotiating with the Syrians."

Israel: HADASH Rejects Joint List With ADP

TA0802114596 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 8 Feb 96 p 12

[Report by Liat Collins]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] Knesset faction chairman Hashim Mahamid yesterday completely rejected claims by MK [Knesset Member] Talib al-Sani' (Arab Democratic Party, ADP) that the two parties are considering running on a joint list for the upcoming elections.

Al-Sani' said a joint team had been established to discuss the issues involved. "A united party would ensure greater Arab representation in the next Knesset, protect the value of the Arab vote, and influence the diplomatic and peace processes," he said.

He said ADP is also holding discussions with other smaller Arab groups, but is not negotiating with Ahmad al-Tibi.

Mahamid called al-Sani's statements "baseless" and irresponsible." "HADASH is not a one-man party, and only its central committee can decide on issues affecting the elections," Mahamid said. He called on "all groups, Arab or Jewish, interested in promoting peace and equality" to join HADASH.

MK Tamar Gozansky (HADASH) also dismissed al-Sani's claim about running on a joint ticket. "It's rubbish. It's just a power play by al-Sani' aimed at angering (ADP leader) 'Abd-al-Wahhab Darawshah," she said.

Israel: Netanyahu, Eytan Reach Understanding on Joint List

TA0702163196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Binyamin Netanyahu and Refa'el Eytan announced that they have reached a memorandum of understanding on a joint Likud-Tzomet list for the elections. The memorandum will be submitted for the two factions' endorsement and signing tomorrow. Knesset Member Refa'el Eytan told our correspondent Yaron Kaner that the discussion regarding the religious status quo will continue.

Israel: Some 2,000 Settlers Register for Labor

TA0702115196 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 7 Feb 96 p 5

[Report by Nehama Dowek]

[FBIS Translated Text] Labor is thinking of placing a ballot box in Qiryat Arba' in view of the fact that 22 local residents registered in the census conducted by the party.

After entering the names in a computer it turns out that some 2,000 residents of Judaea and Samaria have registered as Labor members according to the following break-down: Ari'el — 144; Betar — 21; Bet Arye — 16; Giv'at Ze'ev — 199; Har Adar — 106; Ma'ale Adumim — 383; Qiryat Arba' — 22; Sha'arey Tiqva — 18; 'Eli — 14; Oranit — 74; Eley Sinay — 5.

Initial findings show that 55 percent of the registered members are men and 45 percent are women. The finding of which Labor is proudest is the large number of young members: 50,000 youngsters up to the age of 25, who represent 20 percent of the total number of registered members.

The findings further show that the Arab sector consists of 40,000 members, while the kibbutz sector includes only 30,000 members. As a result, the Arab district will get the 36th slot on the list while the kibbutzim will be

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pushed down to the 50th place. Upon being informed of this fact, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres ordered that a solution be found to this problem to secure a safe slot for the kibbutz movement in the first 30 places.

Israel: Poll Shows 33% of Arabs To Vote Labor

TA0702115396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 7 Feb 96 p A4

[Report by Yosef Elgazi]

[FBIS Translated Text] A poll conducted by Mador Communications and Press in Haifa shows that 53 percent of Arab Democratic Party [ADP] voters would have preferred to have Knesset Member [MK] Talib al-Sani' as head of the list and only 41 percent prefer party chairman MK Darawshah 'Abd-al-Wahhab.

According to the poll, which was held among a representative sample of 1,116 Arab voters and which became available to HA'ARETZ, Labor will receive 33 percent of the votes in Knesset elections; HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] will receive 19 percent; and Ahmad al-Tibi's Arab Movement for Change [AMC], 18 percent; ADP, 14 percent; and Progressive List for Peace [PLP], 4 percent; Likud, 2 percent; the Arab Islamic List [AIL], 1.5 percent.

In response, MK Darawshah claims that his party "did not order such a poll, and such a poll was not carried out." On the other hand, MK al-Sani' said: "The results of the poll were brought to my attention, but I have not seen them yet."

In view of the fact, that all the polls forecast a big success for a joint Arab list, the ADP and the AMC are each making efforts to reach a partnership with the PLP and the AIL.

PLP spokesman, Attorney 'Aziz Shahada, disclosed Monday night that the majority in his movement tend towards a partnership with the AMC. A gathering of PLP activists today will decide on the matter. Darawshah and Dr. al-Tibi confirmed that their movements are not holding talks on the establishment of a joint list.

Israel: Nativ Head Calls Russian Mafia Allegations 'Nonsensical'

TA0702193896 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Yuli Ofeq video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] 'Imanu'el Zismann, chairman of the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee, calls on Prime Minister Shim'on Peres to immediately separate the Foreign Ministry Liaison Bureau, known as Nativ, and the Jewish Agency, and in this way to implement the Hofi Commission recommendations regarding this issue. Our correspondent Yuli Ofeq reports on the committee's session today:

[Begin recording] [Ofeq] The conflict of powers between the Jewish Agency and Nativ today exposed to the Knesset committee irregularities, duplicity of functions, and inappropriate operations which cause real damage to the operation of the aliya envoys in the CIS. Nativ head Yasha Qedmi, who only one month ago was accused by the state comptroller's report of squandering funds, pursues his secretive approach and states that he will answer only to the prime minister. I asked him whether the diplomat who was recently expelled from Russia was employed by Nativ:

[Qedmi] I am not familiar with any of our employees who were expelled.

[Ofeq] According to newspaper reports, you are giving your patronage to the Russian mafia — for example, when the former Ukrainian prime minister arrived here with $30 million.

[Qedmi] Why don't you ask those who spread these nonsensical reports?

[Ofeq] Do you think there is room for the continued operation of the Liaison Bureau?

[Qedmi] If my opinion carries any weight, then the answer is positive. [passage omitted] [end recording]

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Jordan: Government Wants To 'Lift the Suffering' From Iraqi People

MM0802115496 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 8 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat: "Jordan Studying Perry's Statements on Cooperation To Topple Saddam"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman — Contacts were made at the highest level in Amman yesterday to assess and announce Jordan's position on the statements made by U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry on efforts being made by the United States, Jordan, and other states, among them Gulf states, to topple the Iraqi regime.

Informed sources have revealed that the Jordanian Government made contacts with the U.S. State Department following Perry's statements at the Washington Institute for the Near East to explore the background of these statements.

A government source has told AL-HAYAH that Jordan's position is to cooperate with fraternal Arab states and influential powers in order to lift the suffering from the Iraqi people.

The source added that Jordan is seeking through resolutions with international and Arab legitimacy to end the international blockade imposed on Iraq in preparation for returning it to the international community fold and in order to enable it to take its natural place among the states of the region. The government source pointed out that the government will issue a statement on this issue soon. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Al-Mu'ashshir Reiterates Government's Stand on Iraq

JN0802130296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 8 Feb 96

[Report by Randah Habib in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian Information Minister Marwan al- Mu'ashshir said his country's stand on Iraq is clear. Jordan supports all efforts to alleviate the Iraqi people's suffering and to secure respect for their rights and liberties within the framework of Iraq's territorial integrity.

Al-Mu'ashshir was commenting on U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry's statement that Washington is cooperating with Jordan and other countries to expedite the toppling of the Baghdad regime. The Jordanian minister did not deny Perry's statements, however.

Al-Mu'ashshir said that in its efforts to end the Iraqi people's tribulation, Jordan has contacted all countries, particularly Arab countries. He did not name any of these countries. Al-Mu'ashshir said Amman appreciates Washington's support for it.

Perry announced in Amman last month that his country intends to supply Jordan with F-16 fighter planes and said the United States is committed to modernizing the Kingdom's army.

It should be noted that Jordan has distanced itself from the Baghdad regime, particularly after Husayn Kamil Hasan, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's son-in-law sought refuge in Jordan last August. King Husayn said the former Iraqi official had opened his eyes to the reality of the Iraqi regime. Jordan has also sought closer relations with Gulf countries, particularly with Saudi Arabia, which King Husayn will officially visit this Sunday.

Jordan: Daily Criticizes Perry's Statements on Iraq

JN0802123996 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 8 Feb 96 p 22

[From the "Every Day" column by Tariq Masarwah: "Hitting Below the Belt"]

[FBIS Translated Text] This is what hitting below the belt means!!

The U.S. secretary of defense's statements on "coordination with Jordan and others to expedite the downfall of the Iraq regime" will only lead to the flight of capital and investments and undermine the Jordanian market and economy. We note that the stock exchange, the thermometer, is headed downhill under the blows of the U.S. friend — blows that seek to rob industry, the transportation sector, the al-'Aqabah Port, and export and transit operations of their best customers without any substitute other than that of selling illusions about the imaginary Middle East market!!

The U.S. secretary of defense, who "coordinates with Jordan and others," does not name these others. He only talks about Jordan. The wise minister does not care what happens when he steps on Jordan's toes, because Washington has become accustomed to taking Jordan for granted!! His excellency raises a clamor about toppling the Iraqi regime so that he and the U.S. Administration can peddle the return of Iraqi oil to the market. The world is witnessing the lifting of the embargo against Iraq without any announcement from the UN Security Council. This is the deal, and this is the beginning. The only other thing the U.S. secretary is doing, besides stepping on Jordan's toes, is beating hollow drums at the end of the road to divert attention from what is taking place at the beginning of the road. There is nothing wrong if Jordan is harmed or if its vital interests are sacrificed for the sake of

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the game of beating the hollow drums. This is so because Washington has always tried to keep Jordan from standing on its own feet.

Assuming the U.S. Administration really wants to topple the Iraqi regime, we would like to ask the U.S. secretary of defense how the administration will do this "in cooperation with Jordan," when 750,000 U.S. soldiers, 7,000 aircraft and cruise missiles — a destructive power greater than that used in World War II, the Shiite revolution in the south, and the secession of the Turkish-backed Kurdish rebels failed to topple the Iraqi regime? Why did the Iraqi regime not collapse then, and why will it collapse now, "in cooperation with Jordan"??

What new magic wand does Washington or do we have that no one knows about?

This leads us to understand the old and new U.S. policy that calls for safeguarding Jordan because it cannot stand on its own.

Jordan: King To Visit Saudi Arabia in Reconciliation Effort

JN0702112396 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 7 Feb 96 pp 1,7

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — His Majesty King Husayn will visit Saudi Arabia on Sunday [11 February] for talks with King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz in the first Jordanian-Saudi summit that is expected to seal reconciliation following a period of strained ties, Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said Tuesday.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir, briefing reporters after the first regular session of the Cabinet of Prime Minister 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti formed on Sunday, also said the King would visit Egypt "soon" but did not give a date.

During the visit to Saudi Arabia — expected to include an overnight stay there — the King is also scheduled to perform 'Umra, the lesser pilgrimage. The King last performed 'Umra in 1994.

The King will be accompanied on the visit by Mr. al-Kabiriti, former Prime Minister Prince Zayd Bin-Shakir, Royal Court Chief 'Awn al-Khasawinah and several members of the Royal family.

The King's meeting with the Saudi leaders represents the latest breakthrough in Jordanian diplomacy to heal inter-Arab rifts caused by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. It follows a visit to Jordan by Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Prince Sa'ud al- Faysal, in January.

The King was expected to visit Saudi Arabia late last year, but an ailment that affected King Fahd's health preempted the visit. Crown Prince 'Abdallah is serving as Regent now although King Fahd is reported to have largely recovered.

Jordan's relations with Kuwait were also strained in the Gulf crisis sparked by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait but are on the mend.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan and Kuwaiti Crown Prince Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah recently exchanged messages, and Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al- Ahmad al-Sabah sent a message of congratulations to Mr. al-Kabariti upon his appointment as prime minister this week.

According to official sources, contacts are under way between the two countries to reopen the Jordanian embassy in Kuwait and to upgrade diplomatic representation in Amman to ambassadorial level from the present level of charge d'affaires. The sources, however, could not provide any time frame for the move.

Royal Jordanian, the Kingdom's national flag carrier, is also seeking to resume flights to Kuwait soon.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said the King's meetings with the Saudi leaders were in line with Jordan's consistent policy of seeking excellent relations with all Arab countries, particularly the countries of Arab Gulf.

The very appointment of Mr. al-Kabariti as prime minister is seen partly owed to the success he scored as foreign minister in achieving breakthroughs in Jordan's efforts to settle differences with the Gulf states.

The information minister said the King would also visit Egypt upon an invitation from President Husni Mubarak. He did not set a date for the visit.

It was not immediately clear whether Mr. Mubarak's invitation to the King was to a tripartite summit reportedly proposed by Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat, who is seeking wide Arab support and Jordanian and Egyptian backing in particular for the Palestinian strategy in "final status" negotiations with Israel on the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip beginning in May.

Jordan: Draft Accord Reached on Amman-Tel Aviv Flights

JN0802074996 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 7 Feb 96 p 9

[Report by P.V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Jordanian and Israeli airlines have reached an agreement in principle to operate eight flights every week between Amman and

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Tel Aviv, but have not finalised the fares, airline sources said Tuesday.

Under the agreement, which is subject to approval by the senior management of the airlines, Royal Wings, a new Jordanian airline being set up to operate short-haul flights, and Arkia, an Israeli firm which operates shuttle flights within Israel, would operate four flights each every week.

Arkia will operate morning flights to and from Amman and Royal Wings will cooperate evening flights to and from Tel Aviv on Mondays Tuesdays and Wednesdays, said the sources.

The airlines will also operate one round-trip flight on Thursday and Sundays, according to the sources, who said the agreement was reached in talks in Tel Aviv on Monday between officials representing Royal Wings, Royal Jordanian (RJ), the Kingdom's national carrier, Arkia and El Al, RJ's Israeli counterpart. Under an agreement with El Al, which is state-owned, Arkia, a private- owned airline, operates all flights under 90 minutes duration originating in Israel.

"Each airline will be limited to carry 450 passengers per week between Amman and Tel Aviv," said one source, adding that the aircraft would have a 50-seat capacity. "The Amman-Tel Aviv fare has not been discussed in details, but there will be different sets of fares, say for instance businessmen, visits and tour groups etc.," according to the source. "The agreement is not final until it has been approved by the senior management of the airlines concerned," added source. "There will be a second meeting soon after consultations on both sides to finalise the agreement."

The Tel Aviv talks also covered technical and logistical details related to flight operations such as ground handling, ticketing etc., said the source, adding: "It was a highly productive meeting in terms of close cooperation in civil aviation between Jordan and Israel."

Royal Wings, which starts Amman-al-'Aqabah flights on Feb 10, is being set up as an independent airline whose initial operations will be handled under the umbrella of Royal Jordanian. According to 'Ahid Quntar, general manager of Royal Wings, the airline hopes to start Tel Aviv flights by April. Amman's old airport at Marka will be the base of operations for the airline, which has been formed with an eye on the increasing tourism traffic involving Jordan.

Meanwhile, airline sources said Royal Wings had decided to reduce to JD20 [Jordanian dinars] from JD25 the far for a one-way trip between Amman and al-'Aqabah. Round-trip tickets for return on the same day will cost JD35. Earlier the airline, which has one Canadian-build Dash-8 aircraft, had set the far at JD25 one-way and JD40 for round-trip for same day return. RJ will suspend its al-'Aqabah flights as of Feb. 10 and will only fly large groups to and from al-'Aqabah under special arrangements.

For the moment RJ fully owns Royal Wings, which will be formally established and will operate as an independent entity after formalities are completed, RJ officials said.

RJ flights to al-'Aqabah and back operate out of the Queen Alia International airport, about 30 kilometres south of Amman. For Amman residents, Royal Wings flights out of Marka would mean cutting about 30 minutes of drive both ways.

Royal Wings hopes to acquire another Dash-8 plane early next year and to eventually introduce shuttle flights to and from Damascus, Baghdad and other Arab capitals in the region.

The capital and equity participation of Royal Wings have not yet been finalised.

The Ministry of Transport said last week that it was waiting for a Royal Decree to be issued endorsing the transport agreement signed between Jordan and Israel on Jan. 16 before giving the green signal to transport companies to launch direct overland bus and taxi services between the two countries.

Under the agreement, such services, including air flights as stipulated in an annex on civil aviation, could start in 30 to 45 days from the day the Royal Decree is issued approving the accord.

Jordan: Government To Revive National Security Council

JN0702112096 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 7 Feb 96 p 3

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — The appointment of former General intelligence Directorate Chief Mustafa al-Qaysi as rapporteur of the National Security Council on Sunday by His Majesty King Husayn has meant the revival of the council, according to well- informed sources.

Mr. al-Qaysi, also appointed as the King's advisor for national security affairs, told the JORDAN TIMES that the structure of the council is currently being worked on, and is expected to be finalised in the next few weeks.

Senior sources told the JORDAN TIMES that although the council has existed for more than 30 years, it has done so only in name. Other sources, however, maintain that the council did meet intermittently in the 1960's.

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According to sources contacted by the JORDAN TIMES, the council is presided over by the King, and its members include the prime minister, minister of interior, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, director general of the Public Security Department, directors of both the General Intelligence Directorate, and the Department of Military Intelligence, as well as other high-ranking security personnel.

One senior source said the council primarily deals with internal issues relating to "the safety and stability of the country," adding that the decisions made by the council are carried out by the various security agencies in the Kingdom.

The council, according to sources, is similar in format to the U.S. National Security Council, which is responsible for the supervision of the country's intelligence community.

The American National Security Council comprises the president of the U.S. as chairman, the vice president, the secretaries of state and defence, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, and other officials whom the president may appoint with Senate approval. Its staff is headed by a special assistant for national security affairs and is part of the office of the president.

A senior source told the JORDAN TIMES, however, that whereas the council in the U.S. is considered a department, the Jordanian National Security Council is only a committee. The source also added that the Jordanian council has been part of the state apparatus, as opposed to being part of the Royal Court.

Jordan: Information Ministry Reportedly To Be Eliminated

JN0702115296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 7 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Work will begin soon on legislation that would pave the way for "annuling or cancelling the Ministry of Information," Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, the new minister of information, announced Tuesday.

Briefing reporters after a Cabinet session chaired by Prime Minister 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir also said that in the meantime Jordanian media could expect a more conciliatory stance from the ministry in disseminating official information pending its annulment or abolition for which he did not provide a timeframe.

"We will work with all our power to have our media informed of what's happening and of the decision-making process so that it will be balanced in its coverage," he said during the press briefing at the Prime Ministry — a pending regular feature in future media-government relations.

"We want the media to rely on facts and figures instead of rumours, and as a ministry, we'll be working to inform journalists in weekly meetings, and we will prepare meetings with other ministers so that the press can be familiar with what's happening," he said. If an information ministry exists, he said, it should be responsible for preparing legal legislation that would inform the media of what's happening in the country. "We should have transparency of government decisions and should guarantee raising the media's level of responsibility," he said. "We don't want the government to be a sword threatening the necks of the press. "Therefore, (the Ministry of Information's) role will be to express the government's position and to develop media-related legislation."

Journalists are currently preparing an honour code, after which, he said, all existing legislation including the press and publications law will be reviewed and replaced with modern laws. "This will bring us to a stage where the ministry's role in monitoring the press will be minor and basically limited to explaining the government stand on various issues."

The annulment or abolition of the Ministry of Information was a theme raised by Dr. al-Mu'ashshir in the late 80s when he was press advisor at the Prime Ministry before going to on become the head of the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington, spokesman for the Jordanian delegation to peace talks with Israel and the Kingdom's ambassador to Israel. At that time, he had expressed the conviction that the Ministry of Information should, if it had to exist, limit itself as an "administrative" ministry rather than acting as a spokesman for the government.

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Lebanon: Hizballah Official Calls U.S. Envoy 'Terrorist'

NC0802080096 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Committee for the Support of the Islamic Resistance [CSIR] has held a fast-breaking banquet at the Imam Khomeyni Solidarity Committee center in al-Hirmil. Party officials, political activists, popular figures, and men of religion attended the banquet. Also attending were families of martyrs from the al-Hirmil Region and a delegation from the CSIR in al-Biqa' headed by Haji 'Abbas Tulays.

After a Koranic recitation and a speech for the CSIR delivered by Shaykh Usamah Nasir-al-Din, Deputy Shaykh 'Ali Taha, a Hizballah Political Council member, spoke. He labelled the new U.S. ambassador to Lebanon rancorous and terrorist. He said Hizballah and the Lebanese people can expect nothing from this serpent ambassador other than the venom he releases. He said the Islamic Resistance, which is performing its jihad role against air, ground, and naval Zionist aggression in Jabal 'Amil and Western al-Biqa', needs the support of every one of the nation's sectors and classes. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: 2 Sudanese Indicted for Activity Against Egyptian Embassy

NC0702210096 Cairo MENA in English 1945 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Feb 7 (MENA)—Two Sudanese nationals arrested a few weeks ago have been indicted on charges of involvement in gathering information on Sudanese oppositionists and the Egyptian Embassy and Egyptian nationals in Lebanon along with contacting terrorist networks.

Thabit 'Awad and Muhammad Ahmad face imprisonment for three years if convicted of charges of engaging in activities banned by the Lebanese Government. The two accused have confessed to receiving sums of money from the Sudanese consul in Lebanon in return for information on security measures around the Egyptian Embassy here.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Views Israeli Position, Stresses Resolution 425

NC0802075096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has said that Israeli statements on withdrawal from the south are a test balloon to confuse the country and drive a wedge between Lebanon and Syria. He said: There is a clear and known path approved by the whole world: the implementation of Resolution 425. Let Israel implement this resolution and our army and the State are ready to shoulder their responsibilities. I do not believe Lebanon will fall into the trap set by Israeli attempts to shy away from and weasel out of Resolution 425 by using diplomatic or political games and maneuvers. But we are very optimistic about the talks taking place, despite all the political maneuvers we see happening around us, such as early elections in Israel or otherwise. The Arabs have decided that peace is a strategic option. But a just and comprehensive peace restores rights and dignity, two things that are as interlinked as the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. God willing, the talks will reach a positive stage: Israel will withdraw from Lebanon and the Golan Heights and peace will prevail in the region.

Prime Minister al-Hariri added: We now have an army of which we can be proud. We can be proud of all its achievements, particularly its recent achievements, with the end to the war and its becoming a thing of the past, and the army becoming the hope of the homeland.

Lebanon: Buwayz Says Peres Aiming To Stir Up Dispute With Syria

NC0702172396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reacting to Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' statements at the occupied border strip yesterday, Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said these statements constitute a new maneuver and a deliberate attempt to trigger a dispute between Lebanon and Syria. The foreign minister noted that it is obvious that Israel is trying to pose extremely difficult conditions in the negotiations process.

Lebanon: Syria's al-Shar' Arrives With al-Asad Message

NC0802104396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' arrived at al-Masna' on the Lebanese-Syrian border at 1130 today and was received by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz. Al-Shar' said he is carrying a message from Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad to Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi on the peace process and the results of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to Damascus.

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Lebanon: Syria's al-Shar' Discusses U.S. Peace Moves, Ties

NC0802135096 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1150 GMT 8 Feb 95

[Statements by Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in response to questions by unidentified correspondents following a meeting with Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi in the B'abda Palace in Beirut— live; broadcast in progress]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Shar']... in the presence of His Excellency Speaker Nabih Birri, His Excellency Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, and Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz. The message concerns developments in the peace process, particularly the outcome of Secretary Christopher's tour of the region and his talks with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus. I will answer a few questions, maybe two or three only.

[Correspondent] Minister, how do you view Peres' announcement concerning the occupied border strip and Israel's withdrawal from the south, particularly since the announcement seemed to circumvent the Syrian-Israeli track? You repeatedly said that discussions on the Lebanese track will not start until the Syrian track reaches its end.

[Al-Shar'] Simply speaking, the Syrian and Lebanese positions are the same. The link between the two tracks is known to all, including the Israelis. The Lebanese officials responded clearly to Prime Minister Peres' statement yesterday. We believe the Lebanese response was right and fitting. Any attempt to burn the peace process will not work. Comprehensive peace is a Syrian-Lebanese goal, which we will not give up. We will work constantly to realize that goal.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency, the assistant U.S. secretary of state for economic affairs' stay in Damascus coincided with Christopher's statement that improving relations with Syria is linked [words indistinct] on that level through [words indistinct].

[Al-Shar'] The United States is playing a central role in the peace process as one of the two sponsors, rather the major sponsor of the process, particularly on the Syrian-Israeli track. It is natural for the United States to be interested in and eager to achieve a comprehensive peace in the region. You cannot achieve comprehensive peace without Syria. Hence the clear U.S. interest. To reach that goal—to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of the relevant UN resolutions and the land- for-peace principle, which is also the goal of the entire region and the international community— the United States must maintain good ties with the various parties, since, as it says, it is playing the role of the honest mediator and active partner. It is, therefore, requested to give credibility to that role by building suitable relations with the parties to the negotiations.

[Correspondent] A U.S. official, [words indistinct], is currently in Damascus discussing joint Syrian-U.S. projects to help the Syrian economy recover. Can you tell us if these projects are limited to the Golan or if they cover other Syrian regions?

[Al-Shar'] She [not further identified] is not in Damascus right now. She is part of the American delegation. When Secretary Christopher comes to the region, he is always accompanied by a big delegation. But participation in the talks is often exclusive to a few of them.

As for economic relations between Syria and the United States, and although the American side is interested in them, the ABC of a serious discussion of Syrian-American economic relations requires normal and natural relations between the United States and Syria first of all. Thank you.

Lebanon: Hizballah Augments Cooperation With Palestinian Factions

NC0802155996 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports state that Hizballah recently augmented its military cooperation with Palestinian organizations and factions, primarily the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command and the 13 September organization, which is led by Fatah dissident Munir al-Maqdah.

According to Lebanese sources, Iran urged Hizballah to resort to such an alliance and conduct joint sabotage operations in the south.

The sources add that Tehran recently increased the number of its revolutionary guards in Lebanon to monitor Hizballah activities and supervise its operations.

A high-ranking Iranian representative recently arrived in Beirut to inspect the situation and follow up on the implementation of the instructions Iran gave Hizballah for invigorating the so-called Islamic Resistance in south Lebanon.

Lebanon: Hizballah, Amal Hold Coordination Meeting

NC0802084796 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 8 Feb 96

[Report by Amin Shumar in Sidon]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Hizballah and Amal Movement Commands in the south have met to discuss

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domestic developments, especially Israeli aggression against civilians and their property in the south. They stressed the need for continuous hard work to support the steadfastness of our kin as they face the aggression and a suffocating economic crisis.

The two sides called for firmly confronting the enemy, for strengthening domestic unity, and for rising above trivial things to confront major challenges and deprive the enemy of any chance to implement its schemes. The two Commands called on officials, the active forces in the country, and the courageous Lebanese people to demonstrate cohesion and mobilize their energy to activate, support, and immunize the Resistance at this critical stage. The two Commands approved many steps for coordination in the field.

Lebanon: Amal Claims Attacks on Israelis; Casualties Inflicted

NC0602210196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2020 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Amal Movement's operations room issued a statement that one of its groups attacked the [Israeli] occupation forces' position in Haddatha with rockets at 2115 [1915 GMT] today. Material and human losses were inflicted there. The statement adds that columns of smoke were seen billowing from the targeted position. The statement says that another group clashed with the occupation forces on the Bra'shit-Bayt Yahun road. The resistance fighters inflicted casualities on the occupation forces.

Lebanon: 'Fierce' Exchanges of Fire Between IDF-SLA, 'Terrorists'

TA0702123696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier was moderately wounded by a Sagger missile fired by terrorists at an IDF position in south Lebanon. Over the last hour there have been fierce exchanges of fire between IDF and SLA [South Lebanese Army] artillery and the terrorists in the central sector of south Lebanon. UN sources told our correspondent in the north Ilan Ro'e that the IDF has fired dozens of shells at terrorist targets north of the security zone.

Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Claims Attack on SLA Position

NC0702135796 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 1330 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance's operations room has reported that at 1420 today, an Islamic Resistance unit bombarded an agents [South Lebanese Army—SLA] assembly point in al-Hardun with the appropriate weapons. Elsewhere, the occupation forces are now shelling the outskirts of Majdal Zun and al-Mansuri with mortars.

Lebanon: 2 Israeli Soldiers Wounded in Hizballah Attack

NC0702143996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At around 1500 today, al-Mansuri and al- Qulaylah, south of Tyre, were subjected to shell fire from the occupation forces' positions in al-Hardun and al-Shaqif. AFP reported that two Israeli soldiers were wounded when their patrol came under machine-gun and rocket attack on the Arnun-al- Shaqif road.

[In the related report, Paris AFP in English at 1234 GMT on 7 February adds the following: The attack took place "near the crusader castle of Beaufort, security sources said. "A Hizballah spokesman in Beirut claimed responsibility for the attack in the border 'security zone' occupied by Israel."]

Lebanon: 3 Israeli Soldiers Said Killed by Islamic Resistance

NC0702174396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance has carried out two operations: one against an agent of the Lahd [South Lebanese Army] militia in the Bra'shit position and the second against an Israeli patrol made up of 12 vehicles on the Qal'at al-Shaqif road. The patrol was attacked with machine guns and rockets. As a result, a military truck received a direct hit and was totally destroyed. Islamic Resistance sources noted that three Zionist soldiers had been killed in the operation.

Lebanon: Shelling, Mock Raids Reported in South

NC0802090596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli attacks on the south and Western al-Biqa' continued today. NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondents reported this morning that the areas of the central and western sectors came under intermittent shelling. Some of the liberated villages and valleys around them were shelled. The attacks concentrated on the villages of Yatar, al-Mansuri, Haddatha, Shaqra, 'Ayta al-Jabal, Majdal Silm, Kafra, Majdal Zun, Bra'shit, Sribbin, and Bayt Yahun. A large-scale combing operation accompanied the shelling, which reached the outskirts of Yuhmur, Mazra'at al-Hamra', the al-Litani River, and Zibqin. After the shelling, combing

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operations, using large-caliber machine-guns, targeted the area while enemy helicopters flew overhead. Warplanes carried out mock raids over al-Nabatiyah, Iqlim al-Tuffah, and western al-Biqa'. The Islamic Resistance responded to these attacks by attacking the enemy's locations and patrols in Bayt Yahun and Bra'shit. While Israel admitted that one of its soldiers was hurt, news agencies reported that two soldiers were wounded. A statement issued by the Islamic Resistance said these attacks left many among the enemy dead or wounded.

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Syria: Importance of Latest Christopher Visit Viewed

JN0702210896 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 6 Feb 96 p 5

[Editorial by Fu'ad Mardud: "The New Shuttle for Peace"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] If peace should ever be realized between Syria and Israel—and that is still a big if even after the Maryland's negotiations—it will be a big achievement by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. The current shuttle of Mr. Christopher between Damascus and Tel Aviv may be looked at as the last stroke before a long and deep freeze if nothing happens from now on to the election time in both Israel and the United States.

Mr. Christopher's main contribution may be to have given momentum to the Syrian-Israeli talks over the Golan Heights. If the commitments made in Madrid in 1991 are honoured in the region, fifty years conflict in the Middle East will come to an end, and that will be a big success for Mr.. Christopher's shuttle diplomacy.

Until now, the major success for Mr. Christopher's hectic shuttle diplomacy has been reviving the peace talks after the assassination of Israel's former Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. His coming and outstanding success will be in persuading Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel to move beyond his vague policy to a more precise formulation for trading "full peace for full withdrawal" from the Golan heights, and not to link the peace process with the Israeli elections for the new Knesset.

Elections in Israel may have some implications on the peace process, but progress need not await those elections or be hostage to them. It is true that nobody expects major breakthroughs if Israel decides to hold elections three or tour months from now, but Mr. Christopher has to be assured that the election campaign in Israel will not derail the peace talks or freeze them.

Four years of talks have yielded meagre fruit, true enough. But it is for the first time in decades, Israel speaks openly about withdrawing from the Golan Heights though no commitments have yet been made. The promise of real peace is in the air. The wisest course for the Israelis is to speak about the benefits of peace during the Israeli campaign, and—at the same time—let that promise speak for itself.

It has been an anguishing experience for the Shimon Peres government as well as for many ordinary citizens in Israel to find themselves at odds with peace making during the election campaign. Instead, the Israeli government of the Labour—with the encouragement of the U.S.—should commit itself to peace making. Syria is ready for peace. The U.S. is ready for help. And now it is Israel's turn to make the move.

For Israel, the Golan is exclusively a security issue that can be dealt with in many ways.

Mutual and balanced security arrangements are acceptable to Syria after an Israeli full withdrawal. More American diplomatic efforts seem as the most reasonable way for the U.S. to help, because without American persuasion in the direction of Israel and commitment to all parties in the Middle East, peace won't happen.

Here lies the importance of Christopher's present shuttle.

Syria: Decision To Resume Talks Confirms Concern for Peace

JN0702153896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: By announcing in the current circumstances that it agrees to resume talks in Maryland, Syria is confirming its concern to establish just and comprehensive peace and its positive response to the international commitments and efforts, particularly those made by the United States which were expressed by U.S. President Bill Clinton in his message that was conveyed by Secretary Christopher to President Hafiz al-Asad.

The Syrian response to the U.S. commitment is in harmony with Syria's strategic course, which aims at ensuring the success of the international efforts and opening the doors to the negotiations in order to expedite the implementation of the international resolutions and to arrive at the just and comprehensive solution. Syria hopes the United States will be able to bring the Israeli position in harmony with the peace process and the requirements of the desired peace so that the talks will not remain at square one and lose their objective.

What has been achieved in the Maryland talks so far does not correspond to the efforts that have been exerted or the hopes that were pinned on the negotiations. The reason is very clear and the United States understands it more than anybody else. Israel has not yet responded to the requirements of peace. All that it is doing is to circumvent these requirements. However, it has to be said that the Maryland talks clarified to all parties the means to arrive at peace. These are: Full commitment to international legitimacy and its resolutions, complete

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withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, and accepting equal and parallel [mutawaziyah] security arrangements. Continuing the negotiations without abiding by these principles means evasion of peace and an attempt to turn these negotiations into a mere election slogan. If the Israeli officials are sincere about their allegation that the negotiations are not related to the elections, then they should announce clearly that they accept the requirements and principles of peace as this will provide a big boost to the peace process.

Syria has agreed to continue the talks to ensure their success and achievement of the desired objective. It believes that turning the negotiations from a means into a goal in themselves is a major threat which may cause them to fail. Israel is responsible for this. The world is now fully convinced that Syria is keen on peace and is serious with its effort to arrive at this peace. The world is also convinced that it is impossible to establish peace unless it is a just and comprehensive peace, based on international legitimacy and its resolutions.

It is now time for Israel to realize this fact, stop its maneuvers, and state clearly that it accepts such a just and comprehensive peace, which would return to every party its rights and protect security and stability in the region.

Syria: Next Round of Talks Called 'Important Test' for Israel

JN0802075696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 8 Feb 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, AL-BA'TH asserts that Syria provided the peace process with another opportunity for progress during its talks with Secretary Christopher. We in Syria have done a great deal for the peace process, the paper adds. Our leader, President Hafiz al-Asad, was behind the launching the peace process and has allowed it to continue by providing the right conditions and opportunities.

AL-BA'TH says Syria's strategy is based on the option of peace. Syria has given the peace process one chance after another to make progress. It did not spare any step that could save the peace process from Israel's misdeeds and its policy of intransigence.

AL-BA'TH stresses that this does not exempt Israel from its responsibility. Israel is required to determine its attitude toward the foundations of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy. Israel must stop its maneuvers, its attempts at blackmail, and its ambitions of expansionism and control. These attempts have emerged at the negotiating table, sometimes through the patience and disregard of the U.S. sponsor of the peace process. Since this sponsor started the initiative, it must use its influence with Israel — and it is capable of doing so — to make it comply with what this sponsor views as harmonious with the foundations of the peace process and its objectives.

AL-BA'TH adds: All those who care about the success of the peace process hope that the U.S. commitment and concern will translate into strong actions that commit Israel's leaders to removing the obstacles and dropping the unreasonable proposals that contradict the principles of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Unless such action is taken in a very serious and decisive manner, Israeli leaders will continue to deny responsibility for wasting time and will pass up any new opportunity or effort, particularly those of the U.S. sponsor. This will put true peace out of reach for the region.

TISHRIN discusses the deep satisfaction among international quarters with Syria's response to the U.S. proposals to resume the talks with Israel in Maryland. It is not enough for Israeli officials to welcome the resumption of talks. They must adopt stands that ensure the success of these talks. The exploration of views and the discussion of ideas require important and concrete steps to transform the peaceful attitude into a tangible reality. In addition, the Security Council resolutions must be implemented. All of the parties must comply with these resolutions. This will achieve a just peace.

TISHRIN adds that it is common knowledge that Syria has set no conditions for peace other than the restoration of its territory, the removal of the occupation, and the right for displaced Syrians to return to live a normal life, away from threats. In addition, security must be equitable [mutakafi'] so that the arrangements that are reached do not disturb the security of any party.

TISHRIN concludes that the next round of talks will be an important test of Israel's credibility. The ball is now in Israel's court. We hope that Israel will transform its intentions into actions. Actions alone make a just and firm peace.

AL-THAWRAH comments on the same issue in two separate articles. In its first article, the paper says the opportunity for progress is narrowing and time is running out. Those concerned about progress in the peace process and about enabling it to achieve a just and comprehensive peace must work for the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the restoration of land to its owners. Everyone should

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receive his rights, without prejudice to dignity or sovereignty.

AL-THAWRAH says the resuming the talks will make them draw nearer to a decisive end. The talks will show which party is for peace and which is against it; which party calls for peace, works sincerely for it, and provides everything it requires, and which party claims to be concerned about peace, but works against it and does everything to obstruct its progress.

In another commentary, the paper says the problem will always remain with the Israelis, who still reject the principle of full withdrawal and do not accept the principle of parallelism [al- tawazi] and equality [al-tasawi] in security arrangements. It is reasonable to say that a breakthrough will be difficult unless Israel changes its stands and acknowledges Syria's undisputed right to the full restoration of the Golan. The ball is now in Israel's court. Israel must stop going to extremes in its security demands and accept a withdrawal to the 4 June lines if it truly wants to achieve peace before the end of this year.

Syria: Al-Ba'th Argues Talks 'Below' Expectations

JN0802145996 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0820 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, 8 Feb (SANA) — The newspaper AL-BA'TH says that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent tour of the region came amid an atmosphere that is less positive than that which prevailed in the previous tour. It says that the talks that were resumed on the Syrian-Israeli track before the end of last year and continued until a few days ago were below the expectations and hopes pinned on them.

In an editorial today by its Chief Editor Turki Saqr, the paper goes on to say: Israel's position thus far has not help address the basic issue in the peace process on the Syrian-Israeli track. It has also precluded progress in the talks toward their basic issue, that is, the question of Israeli withdrawal back to 4 June 1967 lines.

The newspaper says that the Israelis' insistence on wasting time in discussing the minute details of the issues that come after and not before peace and attempts to obtain free concessions before making any commitment to the foundations of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy absolutely do not help making progress toward the goal of peace.

The paper goes on to say: Despite the many statements by Israeli officials on a daily basis on peace and the peace process, they are not any closer to accepting the requirements of peace. Therefore, what is the use of speaking to the world media about keenness on reaching peace, if the positions on the negotiating table are based on the old and intransigent Israeli policy?

AL-BA'TH adds: We do not want to discuss the test balloon, that is, holding early Israeli elections. However, it can be said that the sincerity of any Israeli official in working for establishing a just, comprehensive, and genuine peace will give him further strength and popularity vis-a-vis the anti-peace trend which resorts to one-upmanship. This is so because genuine peace is the quest of all the peoples of the region. [passage omitted]

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Iran's Borujerdi, Dostam Hold Peace Talks in Pakistan

BK0802113596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Fresh efforts are in progress for a durable peace in Afghanistan through the formation of a broad-based interim government acceptable to all Afghan parties and groups. The Iranian deputy foreign minister, Mr. 'Ala'eddin Borujeridi, and the Uzbek militia commander, General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, are in Pakistan. They held talks with the foreign secretary, Mr. Najmuddin Sheikh, in Islamabad today.

The foreign secretary told newsmen that his discussion with Mr. Borujerdi focused on how far there was readiness among Afghan leaders to move toward the idea of a broad-based government. He said Mr. Borujerdi, who visited Kabul and Jalalabad and met Mr. Borhanoddin Rabbani, Professor Rasul Sayyaf, Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar, Mowlawi Yunes Khales, and Haji Qadi, briefed him that some of his discussions have been useful, while some matters needed to be sorted out in detail.

To a question, the foreign secretary said Iran and Pakistan are of the opinion that there has to be a durable peace in Afghanistan. Such a solution needs formation of an interim government and subsequently a permanent one. He said it is clear that Pakistan has no favorites and any solution will have to be found by Afghans themselves.

Afghanistan: Ex-President Urges 'Sensible' Solution to Crisis

LD0702213896 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, the leader of the National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, said in an interview that the crisis in the country should be resolved in a sensible way and that the fundamental cause of the current crisis in the country is self-interest and ambition. He said: If the brothers were not interested in power, we would not suffer from this tragedy. The main cause of the crisis is only power-seeking.

Esteemed Mojaddedi said: There are some other causes too. Friendly countries did help us, but they have also made big mistakes.

On the Kabul administration's efforts, Mojaddedi said: I believe these efforts are a ruse and a trick. The Kabul administration wants to stay in power longer. The major cause of all destruction is [Ahmad Shah] Mas'ud. The leader of the National Front said: Mr. Rabbani has sent a delegation to Jalalabad. I believe that he wants to destroy Jalalabad, just as he destroyed Kabul. [words indistinct] The recent proposal by his delegation is that Rabbani is ready to hand over power to [Islamic Party official Mowlawi Mohammad Yunus] Khales, through whom he wants to appease Taleban.

Afghanistan: Government Forces Said Defeated in Clash With Wahdat-e Eslami

LD0702192696 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity] source has reported to Radio Message of Freedom that Kabul administration forces were defeated after they launched an attack on the Wahdat-e Eslami forces' positions in Shaykh 'Ali District on 5 February. In the fighting, which continued for several hours, the Kabul administration forces suffered heavy loss of life and damage. The reports say that the Kabul administration on the one hand speaks of resolving the crisis through talks and peaceful measures in the country and on the other hand attacks its opponents' positions. It wants to deceive the opposing groups by speaking peace. The report says that the Kabul administration leaders do not want to resolve the crisis in the country peacefully and through talks. The peace efforts the administration have started are a pretext to prolong its rule.

Afghanistan: Taleban Rockets Hit Kabul After 'Failed Attack'

LD0702160396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night, Islamic army units repulsed an attack by Benazir Bhutto's Taleban to the south of Kabul. Quoting responsible sources, BAKHTAR reported that at about 1900 last night the Taleban mounted an unsuccessful attack on the Islamic army forces to the south of Kabul where they were confronted by the resistance of the mojahedin and the Islamic army forces and were forced to retreat. In response to the so-called Taleban's attack, the Islamic army forces subjected their positions and concentrations to heavy weapons fire. As a result, heavy loss of life and damage was inflicted on the attackers. The exchange of heavy weapons fire continued throughout last night.

To make up for their failed attack, the Taleban launched a rocket attack on a residential area of Kabul City as a result of which 10 people were injured and a number of houses damaged.

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Afghanistan: 'Heavy Clashes' in Emam Sahib Leave 100 Dead

LD0702191896 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to news agency reports, heavy clashes have taken place between the Shura-ye Nezar [Supervisory Council] warmongers and Mahaz-e Melli-ye Eslami [National Islamic Front] armed men in Emam Saheb. The reports say that the fighting started after Amir Nasir, a Rabbani commander, decided to disarm three Mahaz-e Mili commanders. The reports add that both sides used light and heavy weapons against each other. As a result, 40 people were killed on both sides. Sixty innocent local people also lost their lives.

Afghanistan: Government Reportedly Planning To Retake Herat

LD0702203396 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Kabul administration has started arming its supporters who have fled Herat. According to news agencies, [President Borhanoddin] Rabbani, the head of the Kabul administration, recently escalated sending weapons to those who have fled Herat and are now based in a camp in Iran. The report adds that the Kabul administration wants to arm those people immediately to launch a strong attack on Herat, which is controlled by the Taleban, and recapture the lost areas.

India

India: Chavan Says U.S. Backs Bhutto Because Pakistan Arms Buyer

BK0702134496 Delhi DAINIK JAGRAN in Hindi 2 Feb 96 p 1, 11

[PTI Report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nagpur, 1 Feb. — Home Minister S.B. Chavan today said Pakistan is carrying out provocative and aggressive acts at the border to create an atmosphere of fear and apprehension and to invite Indian retaliation. Pakistan believes that in such a scenario it would have the excuse to obtain arms from the United States.

Addresing a meeting of Congress-I workers, Chavan said the U.S. is backing the Benazir government because it finds that Pakistan is a market for its arms. He added that the Clinton administration has turned a Nelson's eye on Pakistan's nuclear capability. It has also ignored admissions by Pakistan's military officials and scientists that their country is capable of manufacturing nuclear weapons.

Chavan expressed the hope that the situation in terrorism- affected Jammu and Kashmir will be normalized within four to five months and democracy will be restored. He said if elections had taken place there in December as the central government wished, the situation there would have been normalized like that in Punjab. He added it is, however, not late for elections.

The home minister said the economic liberalization and the restoration of peace in Punjab are the Rao government's major achievements. He said the central government continues to stay in power due to Rao's policy of forging a consensus and taking everyone into confidence.

Chavan said that some external forces are trying to destabilize the country by weakening the Congress-I. He questioned the wisdom of the constituents of Janata Dal-National Front alliance and Leftist parties in opposing Congress-I. He said these parties cannot even dream of coming to power at the center by jointly or individually opposing the Congress-I. Chavan added that these parties are aware that they cannot dent the vote bank of communal parties. The votes they are counting on are of progressive and secular forces supporting the Congress-I. In case these votes are divided, communal and secessionist elements will stand to benefit.

India: Official Expects Fourfold Increase in Trade With PRC

BK0802040696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The bilateral trade between India and China is expected to go up four times in about five years. This was stated by the commerce secretary, Mr. Tejinder Khanna, yesterday in New Delhi while addressing the India-China Joint Business Council meeting. He said the trade between the two countries is poised to touch the $4 billion mark by the end of this decade.

India: Article Warns of Growing PRC Influence in Burma

BK0702153996 Varanasi AJ in Hindi 16 Jan 96 p 6

[Article by Udai Narain Singh; from the "International" Column: "China-Myanmar [Burma] Military Ties: Threat to India"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Myanmar, where the general public and their representatives have been waging a struggle to restore democracy and human rights, has

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been under military rule for the last few years. The manner in which China has been steadily establishing its hegemony over Myanmar is causing great concern for India. In one way, China has been working according to its well- conceived strategy of blockading India but, the Indian Government has not been paying any attention to this. The most surprising thing is that India, under its economic liberalization policy, has been trying to increase its trade ties with Myanmar's military government instead of giving maximum support to its democratic forces. Strengthening ties with the military junta is against the policies enunciated by Jawaharlal Nehru.

In South Asia, Myanmar has now become China's most reliable ally after Pakistan. China is more trusting of its friendship with Myanmar than with any other country. Two different kinds of dictatorial regimes are currently in power in those two countries: one believes in communist dictatorship, while the other in military dictatorship. [passage omitted].

Myanmar's military regime has been strengthening its military ties with China. It first signed an agreement with China in 1989 to buy 1.2 billion pounds worth of military equipment. Under that agreement, China promised to supply defense equipment, tanks, armored vehicles, rocket launchers, and fighter aircraft. China is finalizing a plan to set up an arms factory in Magwe city in central Myanmar, where light machine guns and semi-automatic assault rifles will be made. Chinese technicians are also assisting in building a naval base on Hainggyi Kyun Island in the Irawaddy River delta. They are also preparing to set up a long-range radar station on the Coco Island, which is only 30 km away from the Andaman Islands, where it may be recalled, India also has a naval base. With this base, China will make its presence felt in the Indian Ocean. It is Beijing's policy cornerstone to establish hegemony in the Indian Ocean. A Chinese general, Chonam Qui [name as transliterated], had stated in his confidential report a few years ago that China was not ready to accept Indian dominance there. This general's statement makes amply clear what Beijing's future plans and intentions are.

At the end of 1994, the Myanmar Government signed another agreement to buy 400 million pounds of military equipment from China. Under this agreement, Myanmar will buy 20 helicopters, more than 50 artillery pieces, at least 60 armored vehicles, six Hainan- type patrol boats, some small gunboats, air-to-surface missiles, AK- 47 assault rifles, and 800 parachutes. Britain's Jane's Defense Weekly reported some time ago that warships and armored vehicles are being acquired under the Army's modernization program, while helicopters, cannons, small weapons, and parachutes etcetera are being procured to combat drug traffickers. This arms supply is being strongly criticized and described as a human rights violation. Just like India, several other countries of the region have become greatly concerned about China's growing military and political influence in Myanmar. China itself possesses 20 nuclear submarines and is capable of producing two nuclear submarines every year.

It is well-known that Myanmar was a part of the erstwhile India and that the British separated it from India to serve their own interest. In the past, India enjoyed very close ties with all Southeast Asian countries, but these have been gradually weakening. Now, the number of the people of Chinese origin has increased in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and other countries of the region. China and Myanmar have come very close to each other in the wake of Beijing's assistance to Yangon in crushing the various ethnic rebel groups. Some observers believe the aim of China's efforts to further strengthen ties with Myanmar is more strategic than commercial. Beijing wants to establish its influence there. The volume of trade between the two countries has now exceeded $1 billion per year. China imports timber, forest products, and gems from Myanmar and exports plastic and electronic goods, cotton cloths, beer, and cigarettes to that country. Thus, it is further consolidating its economic ties with Myanmar, with whom India once used to enjoy very close trade relations.

The main objective of the Chinese prime minister's 1994 visit to Myanmar was to strengthen political ties rather than to broaden trade and friendly relations. India's border dispute with China is still going on. Several rounds of talks have been held between the representatives of the two countries, but the dispute remains unresolved. Meanwhile, China has been maintaining its military cooperation with India's traditional enemy, Pakistan. Now, through Myanmar, China is trying to establish its hegemony in South Asia, which certainly poses a threat to India's security and territorial integrity. Therefore, India needs to remain more vigilant against Chinese efforts to strengthen friendly ties with South Asian countries and its political activities in the Indian Ocean. The people of Myanmar themselves are not happy with China's increasing dominance of their country. The editor of a Myanmar newspaper BURMA ALERT has gone to the extent of warning that the people's disenchantment may one day take the form of a 1967-type anti-China riot where Chinese businessmen were driven out of Myanmar.

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India: Arrest Warrants Issued Against Former Minister Rai, Others

BK0802013096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A designated TADA [Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act] in Delhi has issued nonbailable arrest warrants against the former union minister, Mr. Kalp Nath Rai, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Lok Sabha member Mr. Brijbhushan Sharan Singh, and some others for allegedly harboring terrorists of the Dawood Ibrahim gang [involved in the Bombay bomb blast case]. This follows the filing of charge-sheet by the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] against them in the court of the additional sessions judge, Mr. S.N. Dhingra, yesterday. The CBI also filed the charge-sheet against their secretaries — Mr. S.P. Rai, Mr. Sanjay Singh, and East West Airlines in the case. The judge asked the CBI to produce the accused in the court on Monday. The six associates of Dawood Ibrahim are at present lodged in Tihar Jail.

India: ISRO Signs Contract With Arianespace for Satellite Launch

BK0602140596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian Space Research Organization, ISRO, has signed a contract with Europe's Arianespace for the launch of the telecommunication satellite INSAT-2E late next year. An agreement to this effect has been signed by the ISRO chairman, Dr. K. Kasturirangan, and his European counterpart, Mr. (Shadubigo) of the Arianespace. INSAT-2E, the sixth Indian satellite to be launched atop the Ariane launcher, will provide the entire country with telecommunication services.

India: Poll Shows Congress To Sweep Elections in Andhra Pradesh

BK0802090596 Delhi THE ASIAN AGE in English 7 Feb 96 pp 1,4

[Report by Special Correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress will sweep the Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh, winning 35 or more of the 42 seats from the state according to a leading pollster which had forecast N.T. Rama Rao's victory in the last Assembly polls.

The family feud in the Telugu Desam camp, coupled with the unshaken popularity of "Telugu bidda" Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, is likely to increase the Congress tally from the 25 seats it won in the last Lok Sabha elections to anywhere between 35 and 39 seats, according to a poll survey released by the Centre for Media Studies here on Tuesday [6 Feb].

The survey shows that the Congress has a clear lead over even the combined votes of both the factions of the Telugu Desam. The party, which was humiliatingly routed in last year's Assembly elections, is likely to poll as much as 48 per cent of the popular vote. Surprisingly, the death of Telugu Desam patriarch N.T. Rama Rao has made little difference to the popular vote in favour of Mr Narasimha Rao, with voters showing no variation in their voting intentions in the week before and after his death.

However, N.T. Rama Rao's demise has left the faction led by his son-in-law, Andhra chief minister Chandrababu Naidu, in a better position than that led by his widow, Ms Lakshmi Parvati. The ensuing poll battle in the state will be mainly between the Congress and the TDP (Naidu). The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] is expected to poll a mere seven per cent of votes even though this is almost doubling its previous performance of 3.9 per cent in the last Assembly elections.

While the Congress has gained 15 per cent of the popular vote, climbing up to 48 per cent of the total votes, the votes polled by even a united TDP has fallen from 51 per cent to 31 per cent. The clean sweep of his home state would make a crucial difference to the Congress president, consolidating his position within the party and effectively leaving his contenders out of the reckoning.

An overwhelming 71 per cent of the 4,000 voters polled in the survey of 10 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state said the Congress alone can offer the best government at the Centre. A majority of the voters, however, preferred Mr Naidu's government in the state.

Development rated as the best achievement of Mr Rao's government with 38 per cent, followed by stability with 23 per cent, while price rise figured as its worst failure with 26 per cent, trailed by corruption and infighting.

According to the pollster, the Congress is unlikely to face the problem of infighting in the next election in the state, primarily because rebel candidates would find it almost impossible to mobilise the resources and support required to fight a parliamentary election. In contrast, the party's rout in last year's Assembly election was blamed largely on the large number of rebel candidates who insisted on standing for elections despite not being given party tickets.

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India: Mukherjee Reiterates Commitment to Globalization Process

BK0702072096 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 6 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, has said that economic interests of India are an integral part of its bilateral relations. Addressing the 10th Indira Gandhi Memorial Lecture in New Delhi today, Mr. Mukherjee said the government has used every linkage from the political to the operational in furthering India's economic interests. Reiterating India's commitment to participate in the globalization process, he said one of India's major achievements has been to recognize the need of the private sector in the pursuance of the economic diplomacy.

India: Minister Denies Rupee Fall To Lead to $6 Billion Trade Gap

BK0702132396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Reserve Bank of India [RBI] is considering measures to strengthen the rupee against the U.S. dollar. The RBI governor, Dr. C. Rangarajan, had a two-hour meeting with the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, in New Delhi to discuss steps to combat the rising value of the dollar against the rupee. The finance secretary, Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, was present.

The commerce minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, says despite rise in the value of the dollar against the rupee, the trade deficit will be pegged at $3.5 billion. Talking to newspersons in New Delhi, he refuted reports that the trade deficit would mount to $6 billion following the turmoil in the foreign exchange market.

India: Bank Announces Steps To Curb Speculation in Money Market

BK0702161096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The RBI [Reserve Bank of India] has decided to step up vigilance to curb speculation in the foreign exchange market, while the rupee recovered smartly against the dollar for the second day today. The bank has decided to monitor cancellation of forward contracts booked by authorized dealers for amounts of more than $100,000. Among other measures, it will also closely monitor the dollar-rupee trading transactions by authorized dealers on a daily basis.

The RBI governor, Dr. C. Rangarajan, said in New Delhi that these measures will bring stability in the market. The governor said the RBI is watching the market continuously and will take other measures as are necessary to ease the pressure on the rupee. Dr. Rangarajan had a two-hour meeting with the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, today.

Meanwhile, the rupee recovered by 55 paise against the dollar today without RBI intervention. The rupee which touched an all-time low of 38.20 against the dollar on Monday opened at 37.60 today and moved up to 37.20. Market sources attribute the moderate decline in the value of the U.S. dollar against the rupee due to selling pressure.

The commerce minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, says despite rise in the value of the dollar against the rupee, the trade deficit will be pegged at $3.5 billion. Talking to newspersons in New Delhi, he refuted reports that trade deficit will mount to $6 billion following the turmoil in the foreign exchange market.

India: 3 'Foreign Mercenaries,' 6 Militants Killed in Kashmir

BK0702163996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Kashmir valley, three foreign mercenaries were killed in a fierce encounter with security forces at Kupwara today. The encounter was going on when reports last came in.

Elsewhere in the valley, six militants were killed and 12 arrested during the last 24 hours. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered.

Iran

Iran: Expulsions of Bahraini, Iranian Diplomats Reported

NC0802144796 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 3 Feb 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES Service Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—A senior Iranian diplomat, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said to the TEHRAN TIMES here Friday [2 February] that the Bahraini Embassy's second secretary in Tehran, 'Ali Ibrahim Al-Sisi, was asked to leave Iran because he was involved in spying activities.

Al-Sisi was involved in collecting information on the Bahrainis residing in different cities in Iran, he said.

Iran's Foreign Minister asked al-Sisi on Thursday to leave Iran within one week. A Foreign Ministry official said on Thursday that the expulsion of al—Sisi is the consequence of his involvement in matters which is against diplomatic norms.

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Bahraini authorities said on Thursday that they had asked the third secretary of the Iranian Embassy in Manama to leave the country.

Iran: Bahrain's Problems Said Due to 'No Parliament'

NC0802125696 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 3 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Problem in Bahrain: No Parliament"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Since December 1994 political unrest has swept Bahrain. The unrest flared up again recently and, as a consequence, the government of Bahrain has been trying to externalize a problem which is a domestic one.

What this means is that Bahrain holds other countries responsible for its unrest, a ploy by undemocratic countries in time of serious trouble at home.

The fact is that in 1975 Bahrain dissolved its Parliament. Any country which dissolves its Parliament cannot be called a democracy. When a country has no Parliament — that is, no representation of the people in an assembly — certain groups that want their voices heard protest by some other means.

This is an internal problem: no representation of Bahraini people in a national assembly. Solution: re-establish Parliament; hear the voice of the people.

Government's recourse to suppression will aggravate the situation in Bahrain as would the people's use of violent means in vindicating their fundamental rights.

Unrest in the Persian Gulf is a serious blow to regional cooperation and development. The Government and people of Bahrain should try to settle the problem through peaceful means by grasping the roots of the problem.

Iran: Khamene'i Addresses Air Force on U.S. Policy, Mideast Peace

LD0802130796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the anniversary of 8 February 1979 commemorating the historic occasion when a number of Air Force personnel paid allegiance to Imam Khomeyni, may his soul be admitted to paradise, the commanders and personnel of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Air Force were received by the eminent Ayatollah Khamene'i, esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution and commander in chief of the Armed Forces, in order to renew their allegiance with him.

The eminent leader described 8 February 1979 as one of the historic days of the period of the Islamic revolution and praised those who contributed to that important event. [passage omitted]

The eminent leader praised the epic-making events and self- sacrifices of the Air Force, especially during the eight years of holy defense. He said: The proud moments created by the Air Force at every turn of the imposed war, and the truly selfless struggle for reconstruction which has taken place within the arena of technical progress and development of the Air Force, enabling it to defend and strengthen the nation, all stem from that important move made on the 8 February 1979.

His eminent leader considered that human virtues are the basis of progress and pride. He praised the achievements brought about by the alert, religious, Hezbollah forces, who believe in Islam and rely on the pride of the nation in every assembly and organization. He said: Emphasis on the eligibility of individuals is not because of short-sightedness or spite, but because eligible elements are the true guardians of establishments or organizations, guiding these toward pride and victory — just as the epic achievements of the Air Force during the various operations of the holy defense became possible exactly because it relied on such elements. And of course, today too, thanks be to God, there are no grounds for concern regarding the Air Force in this respect.

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, referring to the great movement of the Iranian Muslim nation to realize the revolution's aspirations to rebuild the country and to secure prosperity in this world and the after-life, pointed out that to realize these objectives, it is necessary to pay constant attention to the jihad against selfish desires and to remain vigilant in the face of the enemy.

His eminence added: Today, 17 years after the Islamic revolution's victory, the enemies of the Iranian nation are still bearing the same grudge and enmity; and despite being less hopeful than in the early days, they continue their confrontation with the Islamic system; and the evil and racist apparatus of Zionism, which has taken full control of the U.S. Government, is baring its teeth and claws at the Islamic system; and this is because the Muslim nation of Iran is independent, free, self-reliant, and in charge of its own free will and vote. And contrary to the current international norms and despite the terror created in the world by America's bullying, the Iranian nation has remained committed to its Islamic and revolutionary principles and is not submitting to the demands of the bullies.

The esteemed leader of the revolution reiterated the Iranian government's and nation's opposition to the so called peace process in the Middle East and said

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this is the basis of the arrogant one's hostility toward the Islamic system. His eminence stressed: The Iranian Government and nation believe that Israel's existence is false and spurious, and basically, there is no such nation as Israel; rather, the Zionist leaders, solely on the basis of racism, gathered groups from various corners of the world, and after usurping the land of Palestine, created a made-to-order [farmayeshi] government in that region. For this reason, we believe that what is happening in the Middle East is not a true peace; rather, it is an agreement to oppress a nation. [passage omitted]

Iran: U.S. Said Waging Psychological War Against Sudan

LD0702151096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1107 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Unattributed Commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum: America's psychological war against Sudan is about to reach new heights. Using the excuse that there is a security risk for diplomats, Washington intends to withdraw all of them — reportedly numbering 25 — from Sudan. These diplomats, according to secondary reports, are to stay in Kenya, Sudan's southern neighbor. In addition to this, the White House has advised 2,100 American citizens who reside in Sudan to leave that country as soon as possible.

After the UN Security Council passed a resolution against Sudan, the U.S. Government, which has played a fundamental role in this move, is expressing anxiety over the possibility of attacks on its own citizens. The resolution which passed last week has given the Government of Sudan a maximum of 60 days to hand over to the Ethiopian Government, three Egyptians accused of involvement in the assassination attempt against Mubarak. Ethiopia has accused Sudan of giving asylum to these three individuals whereas the Sudanese Government denies that they are in Sudan.

At any rate, this issue has turned into a pretext for Washington's leaders who are using it to increase their political and propaganda pressure against the Government of Sudan.

For the past six years, when Muslim officers led by 'Umar al- Bashir took over power in that African country, Sudan has been subjected to propaganda attacks and political pressures from the West, notably by America. In this context, some of Sudan's neighboring governments who enjoy good relations with America have consistently acted as elements of pressure against the government of General 'Umar al-Bashir. The support given to the southern rebels who are fighting the armed forces of Sudan and the creation of limited border clashes are among the actions taken against Sudan, mostly through American instigation.

Because of its decision to implement Islamic law in Sudan's mainly Muslim-populated provinces, Khartoum has aroused the anger of the West and the region's secular states. These states, in their latest joint action which is being openly directed by Washington, have decided to isolate Sudan in the international arena.

America's influence in the UN Security Council was enough to prompt the latter to issue an ultimatum and a strongly worded resolution against the government of Sudan just because three Egyptians were suspected of the attempted assassination of Mubarak.

The White House decision to withdraw its diplomats from Sudan is another link in the chain of psychological warfare conducted by Washington against Khartoum, believing that it can discourage the Muslim people of Sudan from their aspirations for independence and life under the light of Islamic law.

Iran: Majles Statement Criticizes U.S. Policy

LD0702210996 Tehran IRNA in English 2103 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 7, IRNA — The Majles on Wednesday called on the nation to renew its allegiance with the ideals of the father of Islamic revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeyni, by massive participation in the Bahman 22 (Feb. 11) rallies marking the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran.

In its statement, the Majles asked the people to safeguard the ideals of the late leader by following the guidelines of the present leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i.

The statement partly read: The increasing power of Islamists on the international scene has frightened the U.S. to the extent that it has launched a full-scale aggression in a bid to step the tide of the Islamic revolution in the world.

The U.S., it noted, has amassed massive military forces in the Persian Gulf under pretext of checking the progress of the Islamic revolution.

As an example of Washington's jingoism and hostility towards the Islamic revolution, the statement cited the dlrs. 20 million budget sanctioned by the U.S. Congress for subversive operations against Iran.

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Iran: Russia's Primakov Invites Velayati To Visit Moscow

LD0702161596 Tehran IRNA in English 1557 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 7, IRNA — Russian Ambassador to Tehran Sergey M. Tretyakov submitted the Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmoud Va'ezi a message from Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov here Wednesday.

Primakov in the message has invited his Iranian counterpart 'Ali Akbar Velayati to pay an official visit to Moscow in March.

Va'ezi, referring to the growing ties between Iran and Russia, called as "significant" the visit to Moscow of Velayati under new conditions prevailing in bilateral ties. He added that there were numerous subjects concerning bilateral ties and regional issues that should be discussed by Iranian and Russian officials and such a visit could open a new chapter in the two countries' relations.

The Iranian official underlined that Iran's efforts were based on peaceful settlement of crisis in Tajikistan and that Iran was ready to extend all kinds of assistance in that regard. Moreover, the two sides at the meeting exchanged views on developments in Tajikistan and the trend of Ashgabat talks, underlining Tehran's and Moscow's will in finding a peaceful settlement of crisis in Tajikistan.

Iran: Police To Collect Unlicensed Weapons 11 Feb

LD0802114696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the wake of the esteemed leader's agreement to pardon all those who possess unlicensed weapons and ammunition, the Law-Enforcement Force has announced that it will begin collecting such weapons and ammunition.

In an interview with reporters this morning, the commander of the Law-Enforcement Force pointed out: The general amnesty for the holders of unlicensed weapons will come into effect on 11 February, the auspicious anniversary of the revolution. The personnel of the Law-Enforcement Force will collect any such weapons and ammunition within a period of six months.

He asked for cooperation of all the executive organs and mass media to facilitate the implementation of this plan. He warned that after the six-month deadline, the Law-Enforcement Force will decisively prosecute anyone in possession of illegal arms and ammunition.

Iran: President Addresses Cabinet Meeting 7 Feb

LD0702225496 Tehran IRNA in English 2130 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 7, IRNA — President Hojjatoleslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here Wednesday that the nationwide rallies on February 11, in celebration of the 17th anniversary of the triumph of the Islamic revolution, would be especially meaningful in light of heightening U.S. hostility with Iran.

The president who was addressing a cabinet meeting also expressed hope that the forthcoming elections for the Legislative Assembly of Iran (Majles) would ensure what is proper for the Islamic Republic as well as safeguard the rights of the people.

He also reminded that slogans in election campaigns would have to be consistent with the principle of respect to the dignity of the people.

Elsewhere in his address to the cabinet he said that politically and economically Iran enjoyed a good status with adequate foreign exchange reserves and raw materials for its indigenous industries.

Rafsanjani also observed that exports in the current calendar year were steadily up and that the same tempo would continue in the coming years.

Iran: Ground Forces' Commander Interviewed on Arms, Readiness

NC0702082096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 7 Feb 96

[Interview with Major General Dadbin, commander of the ground forces of the Iranian Armed Forces, by two unidentified announcers on today's "Iran: My Land" feature — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Male announcer] Good morning Major General Dadbin.

[Female announcer] Welcome.

[Dadbin] I too greet all the dear listeners and congratulate them on this auspicious Ten Days [of Dawn]. [passage omitted]

[Male announcer] What is the role of the Armed Forces in safeguarding the borders of Islamic Iran?

[Dadbin] From the first days after the Islamic Revolution victory, the Armed Forces, particularly the ground forces, followed the orders of the late imam and stood shoulder to shoulder with our heroic nation against plots in Gonbad, Khorramshahr, and Kordestan and, through eight years of the sacred defense, heroically resisted.

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We have dear ones who were on the borders from the start of the imposed war. They remain there. The ground forces are now deployed on the southern and western borders and are safeguarding the bastions of honor and glory.

[Female announcer] We thank you and we greet the pure souls of the martyrs of the Armed Forces and congratulate their families for raising such children. [passage omitted]

What is the readiness of the ground forces of the Islamic Republic's Armed Forces?

[Dadbin] The ground forces gave 46,000 martyrs, 270,000 disabled personnel, and hundreds of proud prisoners of war and thus gained priceless experience throughout the eight years of sacred defense. As for general training, serious efforts have been made among high- level personnel.

Our jihad of self-sufficiency has succeeded. We have manufactured most of the spare parts we need. We are manufacturing almost all the arms we need and we are achieving self-sufficiency. Our helicopters are being overhauled and most of the helicopters damaged during the war have been overhauled. We have manufactured the most advanced weapon in the ground forces—tanks—and are approaching mass production. We have manufactured new APC's, advanced amphibious-ground APC's, with a very good speed and with very good firing capability. God willing, this will be displayed on 29 Fervardin [18 April]. Generally speaking, we have reached a good point in self-sufficiency.

I think we are enjoying the best conditions of combat readiness. With God's help we are ready to carry out any type of operation on the orders of the esteemed leader.

[Female announcer] God willing. We wish success for all those who are continuing along the path of our dear martyrs. [passage omitted]

Iran: Hashemi-Rafsanjani Discusses Elections

NC0802073696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, speaking at a Ramadan fast-breaking reception attended by members of the cabinet, deputies, advisers, and their families, said that Islamic Iran will again display a steadfast and spectacular presence in support of the Islamic Revolution and in the 22 Bahman [11 February] marches [marking the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution]. He added: This march is particularly important because of America's explicit and practical stance against Iran. He added: The people of Iran alertly understand situations very well and will give a decisive reply to such futile efforts.

Referring to the political and practical significance of the elections for the fifth Majles term, the president stressed: What is expedient for the Islamic system and the people's rights should be comprehensively seen in each phase of the elections.

Stressing the need for every election official to ensure spectacular and free elections, he stated: The people are alert and vigilant and have displayed the extent of their mental and political maturity often. They should choose the best as their deputies.

The president stated: In the Islamic system of Iran, in which Islam and the Koran are the pivots of action and decision, safeguarding the people's dignity and respect in election campaigns is extremely important. The candidates should observe divine virtue and make the safeguarding of their Muslim brothers' respect and the people's rights and dignity their principle.

Referring to the country's good political and economic status, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani added: There are many opportunities for serving and rebuilding the country. Iran is doing extremely well as far as the budget, foreign exchange, and industrial raw materials are concerned. He stressed that with help of immense popular backing, executive officials can concentrate all their efforts on rebuilding and developing the country.

Iran: Minister Suggests Need for Consensus in Forming Party

NC0802151496 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 3 Feb 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES Service Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran Group-16 seems far from being an organized party, Education Minister, Mohammad Ali Najafi told the TEHRAN TIMES Wednesday [31 January].

Organizing a party needs certain requirements which the G-16 [group of 16 officials] lacks at present, Najafi said, stressing that there are ample basic issues which should be explored within the group to reach a consensus.

He further stressed that since the group members have not exchanged views on the basic issues such a consensus has not been reached yet.

Alluding to the President Rafsanjani's expectations on the part of the executive officials for observing impartiality in the upcoming elections, Najafi said

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certainly the ministers who are members of the G-16 will keep complete impartiality in the elections.

Other members, as mentioned in the second statement of the Group, Najafi stressed, will do nothing more than introducing the eligible candidates [sentence as published].

Asked whether it would be in contradiction with their impartiality, Najafi said nominating certain candidates who are more eligible is by no means an interference in the elections.

If a minister abuses either his position or state facilities to propagate for a certain candidate, such an act will be interference in the elections, he stressed.

Yet, he added that if one of the Group candidates win the elections it does not mean that the candidate has been appointed by the executive branch. He stressed that people are absolutely free to vote for their candidates.

Every group can nominate its own candidates and if people wish to vote for the candidates nominated by the G-16, they are free to do so. Drawing up a list of candidates will not make people vote for them, Education Minister said.

Most of those who are active in legislative and judiciary branches are members of different groups which introduce their own candidates.

Therefore, having certain position in a government organ is not contradictory to membership in a group, he said, stressing that this is not tantamount to partiality or interference in elections. Asked if there is any connection between the G-16 (now G-6) and the meeting of the Judiciary officials on January 29, wherein head of the Organization of Investigation was commissioned to probe into the probable abuse of administrative organizations of governmental facilities, Najafi said the three powers have organized certain headquarters to prevent interference of their own subordinate organs in the elections.

To this end the legislative power acts through the Guardian Council and its affiliated organs as does the executing branch which formed a special inspection team three months ago.

Therefore the Judiciary branch is doing so through its own means which is the Inspection Organization, Najafi said, describing the move as positive.

Furthermore, he said, the judiciary has its own duties and is required to probe into different social issues which could be of a legal or judicial nature. For instance, probing into the eligibility of the candidates or supervising the use of government facilities.

He further alluded to the enemy's propaganda against the Islamic Revolution, saying that through resorting to the propaganda, they wish [to] frustrate the people, causing them not to participate in the elections.

Iran: Legality of Officials' Statement Discussed

NC0802094496 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 24 Jan 96 p 4

[Commentary by Dr. Habib Chini: "The Future Majles and the Future of the Majles"]

[FBIS Translated Text] While the Majles debates next year's state budget we are witnessing the various phases of the elections for the fifth Majles term. Much is being written in the press about who should become a candidate, who should tender their names as candidates, and sometimes even on "who should or should not be elected." Much is being written about whether the technocrats should gain seats in the Majles, whether there should be parties in the elections, how many parties should be created, and the pros and cons of parties. But all that has been said and written originates from those who are involved in the rule and in progovernment organizations—both private and public. These discussions are almost exclusively carried out in the press, while radio and television are silent and sometimes only read out press headlines or only report on what officials say. This is apparently because radio and television, an immense state institution, do not want to express a clear view on the issue before the names of the candidates are published. But this conservative stance is not correct. If the elections are a national issue and everyone should participate in them, all the organizations in general and the radio and television in particular should guide the people. No serious and comprehensive discussion of the role of the people and groups or the need—or not—to form parties has been carried on state radio or television. And, since the registration of candidates has not yet started, naturally, no one has been called on to discuss what he will do if elected. Experience has shown that few opportunities are granted for such speeches. When the people do not have ample time to study their candidates' programs carefully, they vote for individuals rather than platforms. In the coming elections the candidates should be given more opportunity to introduce their platforms and programs.

A recent development concerning the coming Majles elections is that several ministers and high-ranking officials issued a statement last week in support of the president. On Monday [22 January] the minister of education spoke to correspondents at the Majles about the reasons behind the publication of this statement

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and implied that this group will submit the names of candidates for Tehran and possibly for the other cities. According to remarks by Dr. Najafi cited in ABRAR: "No decision has yet been made about the publication of the list of candidates by officials. What has been published in the press is only guesswork." He also stated that "the preparation of a list of candidates by officials or support for candidates without stating an individual's position or rank is not legally banned."

The legal aspects of whether or not officials are allowed by law to submit the names of candidates or express support for them without stating their rank and position is a matter for the Council of Guardians. It is duty bound to see if anything is against the law, against Islamic decrees, against the Constitution, or against the laws of the country, and to see whether actions do not conform with Islamic teachings and the Constitution, which the Council approved. Najafi mentioned guesswork by the press. Following a statement referred to as "Support for Hashemi" and remarks by Education Minister Dr. Najafi, guesswork or—to put it in its political context—"rumor" has spread throughout society. You cannot publish a statement on the elections signed by all but 11 ministers and other high-ranking state officials and expect society to say nothing and no one to make any guesses. As for talk about these gentlemen's intention to form a new party, there is nothing wrong with this. A party can be formed and the affairs of the country can be followed up in a more organized manner through political formations. But if the issue is a party that wants to be monopolistic and spread discord in society, instead of unity, it will be doomed to fail, like all the other parties formed in Iran in the past, even if its founders currently hold high positions in the government.

We return to our major and basic issue—the declaration of platforms and programs. When people expect a candidate to submit his program in a good and understandable manner, how can you expect the people to support a party or a group that has not published any information on its charter, objectives, and programs? "Support for Hashemi" on its own cannot be sufficient for the people to express support for a party. The people may know President Hashemi- Rafsanjani as well as high-ranking officials in the regime know him. The people on the street feel and understand the problems with their entire being. But political officials assess things on the basis of their policies or the policies of the group they support. If the future program of the system's officials remains as it has been for years and the people are satisfied, then it would be vain to form new groups. But if they have new and better programs to submit, they should do so. We should ask: Why have you not submitted these better programs? Was there no Majles and its revolutionary policies to help you? It may be too early to say this but it is the duty of journalists to feel their national responsibility and to convey what others say before anyone else does. Is the issue one of the fifth Majles preparing the grounds for revising the presidential elections such that a president can serve for over two terms? Let us not go into this topic right now and let us not resort to guesswork on such sensitive issues because, before we know it, the time will come to raise such issues and, God willing, whatever is in the interests of the country will win.

What the people expect of the election and its processes is economic growth, public welfare, and the extension of social justice daily. If things move this way—and they are—the people will accept them. If not, they will lead to disappointment. We hope everything that happens is in line with our national aspirations and aimed at our society's moral and material progress.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Minister on Terrorist Groups, Egyptian Embassy Blast

NC0702121696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1100 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Feb (MENA)—Pakistani Interior Minister Nasirullah Khan Babar has noted his country's readiness to extradite any member of the terrorist groups or Arab Afghans in Pakistan when information about their whereabouts and activities becomes available.

He said it is difficult to know how many people there are because they are inside the refugee camps on the borders with Afghanistan or inside Afghanistan, adding that some of them have married Afghan or Pakistani women, making it difficult to identify them.

In an interview with AL-MUSAWWAR to be published on Friday [9 February], Babar said that the ongoing investigations into the bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad have categorically proved that the two people who carried it out were killed in the explosion. He added that a person suspected of financing the operation was arrested. He is an Egyptian with Canadian nationality who works as the regional director of a Canadian aid agency in the Peshawar area. Many forged passports were found in his house.

He said this defendant insists on denying any involvement despite evidence confirming his part in the plot as well as that of his son- in-law, who fled to Afghanistan and is now being pursued.

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Pakistan: Prime Minister on Conflict With India, Extremism

NC0702143796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1050 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Feb (MENA) — Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has called on the Islamic countries to unite their efforts against the extremist groups that have distorted the image of Islam.

Bhutto said in an interview with the weekly magazine AL-MUSAWWAR in its Friday, 9 February issue that the phenomenon of extremist groups has spread in numerous Islamic countries and that these groups use violence to get to power; therefore, it is important for these countries not only politically, but also internationally, to unite their efforts against these groups and show the world the real Islam that rejects violence.

Bhutto pointed out that her country handed over to Saudi Arabia a supporter of Usamah Bin-Ladin, in addition to the nine Egyptians it handed over to Egypt.

Bhutto expressed her belief that Egypt can play an important role in reconciling the warring Afghan factions because of its strong ties with the various international powers.

Regarding Pakistan possibly using its influence in the Afghan crisis, the Pakistani prime minister said: We have political relations and contacts with the various groups, but we do not have any influence over these groups for achieving our objective.

Bhutto added: All we are interested in is establishing an expanded government that is accepted by the various Afghan factions. She pointed out that it is not the right of Pakistan or India or any other party to decide who rules Afghanistan.

She affirmed that this matter should be decided by the Afghans themselves. She said: We could cooperate with the international mechanism to establish the peace and stability the Afghans want, which would eventually lead to an expanded government.

Bhutto indicated that the build-up of Indian nuclear weapons and missiles constitutes a threat not only to Pakistan but also to the Gulf and Middle Eastern countries. She said that Pakistan knows very well the dangers that threaten its national security; therefore, the country will take all the necessary steps to protect its national security.

She added that Pakistan has so far demonstrated a great deal of self-restraint, but the international community must stop India and prevent it from proceeding with its nuclear ventures. She said the consequences of such ventures will be extremely negative for the whole Indian sub-continent.

On the escalating violence in Karachi, Bhutto expressed her belief that there are foreign forces fomenting violence and terrorism there because it is the biggest industrial city. Obstructing operations in Karachi means frustrating the national economy and harming Pakistan's interests.

Bhutto affirmed her country's readiness to enter into political negotiations with the Muhajir Qaumi Movement if this group discards their weapons and allows six months of peace and tranquility to pass.

Pakistan: Iranian Envoy Comments on Afghan Peace Efforts

LD0702210496 Tehran IRNA in English 2014 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Feb. 7, IRNA — Iran's Ambassador to Islamabad Mohammad Mehdi Akhondzadeh here Wednesday told the new ground force commander of Pakistan, General Jahangir Keramat, that despite hostile schemes of the enemies of the Islamic revolution the Iranian people were now proudly celebrating the 17th anniversary of the Islamic revolution.

He said the Islamic Republic advocated an immediate return of peace to its neighbour Afghanistan, and that the Iranian Government would do everything to ensure that stability would return to that country.

The new ground force commander of Pakistan, in reply, voiced pleasure with broadening of relations with Iran and expressed confidence that the ties between the two neighbouring countries would be permanent.

General Keramat said his government, too, maintained that peace should return to Afghanistan by equally involving all rival groups in that country.

The Iranian ambassador also handed the Pakistani commander a letter of felicitation from the chief of the joint staff of the Armed Forces of Iran General 'Ali Shahbazi on the occasion of Keramat's taking office.

Pakistan: Bhutto's 'Emotional' Speech on Kashmir Criticized

BK0702150996 Karachi JASARAT in Urdu 7 Feb 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Emotional Speeches Lack Sincere Passion"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, in her speech broadcast by radio and television expressing solidarity with the Kashmiri people, said the sacrifices of Kashmiri martyrs and freedom fighters will

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not be in vain and that cruelty and barbarism will certainly be defeated in Kashmir. A day will come soon when the Kashmiri people will be able to enjoy freedom and live with dignity and honor. She added that due to its failure in occupied Kashmir, India is now spreading the war frenzy. However, the Pakistani people and the armed forces are fully prepared. She also said that we will always support the Kashmiris. The prime minister said many things about Kashmir, and no doubt, it was a good speech.

Good in the sense that lot of beautiful words were used. The prime minister tried to lend a sentimental touch with her voice, but she could not create that impression. This is because her speech was full of emotionalism, and lacked the sincerity of passion. Emotionalism cannot make up for true passion. Emotionalism is generally used to cover one's faults while true passion leads to some practical steps. In this regard, when we review the present government's performance on Kashmir, we can hardly find any satisfying aspect. The government has been in power for more than two years and during this period, resolutions on Kashmir have been withdrawn three times from different international forums. This was because Pakistan failed to get the support of even the Muslim countries, what to talk of others, on these resolutions. Despite a lot of hullabaloo, we have probably not made any serious efforts to win the support of the international community. The government has established a committee on Kashmir headed by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan. While there is a general impression that this committee must be doing something, so far it has not made any remarkable achievement. However, the only thing which has been done is that Benazir Bhutto has delivered many speeches on the Kashmir issue during her foreign visits. However, speeches cannot be termed as "performance."

Opposition leader Mian Nawaz Sharif has said in a press conference in Islamabad that he is ready to support all government measures to make the struggle of Kashmiris a success. This statement is obviously quite encouraging. However, a closer look shows that this is also full of emotionalism and lacks sincere resolution. Nobody can expect Nawaz Sharif not to cooperate with the government's efforts to support the Kashmiri struggle. This situation would seem very different if his statement is viewed from the context of his attitude in the past. Then, the question arises on what Sharif did for the success of the Kashmiri freedom struggle when he was prime minister for two years. "Hardly anything" is the only answer.

If we look at this seriously, Kashmir is not the only case. There are many other issues where expressing emotion instead of true spirit is considered the right step. This has now become a national affliction that is destroying us from the inside. The nation is also being influenced by the character of the nation's leaders. This is very dangerous. It would be a tragedy if the nation also started giving speeches that are full of emotion but lacked any sincere passion.

Pakistan: MQM Senator Asks Army Chief To Protect Muhajirs

BK0802034896 (Internet) MQM NEWS in English 8 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, February 1, 1996—In a letter to General Karamat Jahangir, MQM Senator Ishtiaq Azhar, appealed that the General must take necessary steps to protect the innocent lives of Muhajirs from the ruthless clutches of Paramilitary Rangers. He said the current ruthlessness of Rangers and Police have equaled the barbarism of Mongols. He said people of Karachi are increasingly hating Rangers because of the ruthlessness and also losing their faith on the Army. Senator Ishtiaq Azhar asked to take immediate action to protect innocent lives before People of Karachi and Urban Sindh completely loses its faith on Army. He asked the General, that why a military establishment has given free hand to kill, rape and loot Muhajirs?

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: 'Unprecedented' Security Measures Implemented After Blast

BK0802122896 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Unprecedented security measures were implemented in Colombo and its suburbs due to independence day celebrations held yesterday. Large numbers of policemen and soldiers from the three armed forces were mobilized from other parts of the country. Newspapers from Colombo have been disseminating alarming stories after a bomb attack on Colombo's commercial center. A Colombo paper reports that it was the first assault of a suicide squad, and that 16 more people have been trained and sent on a mission to carry out 16 such attacks. Similarly, another paper from Colombo reports that 100 Black Tigers have been selected to carry out such attacks. The government is worried that such whimsical propaganda carried out as false propaganda launched by the government will greatly upset the Sinhalese people and will affect the morale of the armed forces to a great extent. [sentence as received]

It has been announced that schools will reopen in Wanni areas on 1 March. [passage omitted]

Trucks sent to Vavuniya to transport essential goods have been detained by the Sri Lankan Army. Twenty-

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five trucks have been impounded over the past two days. At the same time, ordinary traders have also been detained in Vavuniya. Traders and civilians who went to Vavuniya last Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday have been detained by the Sri Lankan Army. Of them, only a few civilians returned to Omantai yesterday. [passage omitted]

Sri Lanka: Foreign Envoys Express Solidarity With Government

BK0702124196 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1100 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A team of visiting ambassadors told the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lakshman Kadirgamar, that they have come to Sri Lanka ignoring security concerns to show solidarity with the Government of Sri Lanka in the hour of grief. They all unreservedly condemned the recent act of terror by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] and said they supported the approach of the Sri Lanka Government to reach a political settlement through the devolution proposal put forward by the government. They expressed confidence that the tremendous resilience shown by the Sri Lankan people in overcoming such crisis would no doubt be repeated in this instance as well and pledged to persist with expanding economic ties between Sri Lanka and their respective countries.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar thanked the ambassadors and high commissioners for their kind gesture in participating in the national day celebrations and the confidence they have placed in Sri Lankan people. The foreign ambassadors and high commissioners based in New Delhi and Singapore accredited to Sri Lanka as well from Australia, Belgium, European Union, Mauritius, South Africa, and Sudan expressed their views.

Sri Lanka: Government Urges Foreign Envoys To Take Action Against LTTE

BK0802073496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 8 Feb 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has called upon the Envoys of a number of countries to take action against the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] and its front organisations where there are indications of those organisations being involved in activities supportive of terrorism in Sri Lanka, seeking to undermine the efforts of the Government to find a political solution to the North- East problem through democratic process of negotiation.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar yesterday briefed the diplomatic representatives of the countries concerned with information concerning such activities like extortion, fund raising, trade in illicit arms, abuse of information media, etc. carried out by the LTTE and its supporters.

It was pointed out that the member states of the United Nations are obliged to co-operate in taking action against the perpetrators of terrorism in terms of international norms and legal obligations deriving from declarations, re-solutions and other instruments adopted by the United Nations.

Many countries including the European Union have already expressed condemnation and deep concern over the escalation of terrorist acts particularly those directed against innocent civilians by the LTTE, including the recent bomb outrage at the Central Bank in Colombo.

The Envoys present thanked the minister for the briefing provided and assured their governments' co-operation consistent with their international obligations.

Sri Lanka: European Union To Step Up Surveillance on LTTE

BK0702125796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1100 GMT 7 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The European Union [EU] will step up surveillance of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] to put a curb on their activities in member countries. While monitoring the LTTE within the EU countries, it will also step up cooperation in sharing information and intelligence on the activities of the LTTE. The European Union ambassador for Colombo who is based in New Delhi, (Francine Hannoway), at a press briefing at the Foreign Ministry yesterday expressed the horror and condemnation of the union on the recent bomb blast. The EU has pledged to assist the Sri Lankan Government in its development efforts as it did in the past. She stressed that the EU would assist in development activities with regard to irrigation and in developing computer software and jewelry. She further pledged that the European Union would set up a fully fledged embassy office in Colombo soon.

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Sri Lanka: Reports Claim LTTE Hopes To Execute 40 'Arrested' Civilians

BK0802071596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 8 Feb 96

[Report by Upul Balasuriya, Vavuniya Group correspondent — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] leaders in Kilinochchi have 'arrested' 40 Tamil civilians including several businessmen and government servants who spearheaded a move to stage a public demonstration to protest against the atrocities being committed by the rebel group, travellers from Jaffna arriving here said.

They also said that the Kilinochchi area leader has sought permission from LTTE leader Prabhakaran to execute the 40 dissidents.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have been regularly carrying out public executions of dissidents in the north as a warning to others. It is estimated that well over 100 civilians who dared to defy the LTTE have been shot dead during 1995.

Sri Lanka: Report Details Latest Battles Between Troops, LTTE 'Rebels'

BK0702065496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 7 Feb 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two soldiers were killed and three others wounded when a security forces patrol was ambushed by rebels in Madagal in the Jaffna peninsula early Tuesday.

The rebels too are believed to have suffered casualties during the exchange of fire which followed.

Meanwhile two LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres were killed when an army route clearing patrol attacked a group of Tigers waiting to ambush them at Mailambaweli, Batticaloa around 6.30 p.m. on Monday, February 5.

The others in the group had fled the scene leaving behind two hand grenades and a cyanide capsule, military sources said.

Meanwhile at Pettalai about 4 kms from Valachchenai in eastern Batticaloa district, a civilian was shot and stabbed to death by suspected LTTE cadres on Sunday night, according to the Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence.

The HQ also reported a mortar barrage and small arms fire directed by the rebels at the Pettalai army detachment on Sunday morning.A civilian was killed while another civilian and three soldiers were wounded during the attack.

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